POINTS AT ISSUE

AND

SOME OTHER POINTS

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CONTENTS

COLLEGE ENTRANCE REQUIREMENTS IN ENGLISH

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[The particular state of affairs to which this paper was addressed no longer exists. Yale has fallen into line with other colleges in requiring English for admission. Yet recent discussions show that the question of entrance requirements in English — what they should be and whether they should be at all — is still a burning one. The paper is therefore reprinted, without change, from the *Educational Review* of May, 1892.]

THE solitary position which Yale occupies — among the New England colleges, at least — in requiring no English at all of candidates for admission to the freshman class, is constantly made the theme of sorrowful or indignant comment in educational journals. Some excitable writers see in the fact evidence of "shameful indifference" or even "hostility" to the English language and its literature. The only concession to the mother tongue made by the catalogue, in the paragraph describing the terms of admission, lies in the words which call for sight translations from prose Latin and from Xenophon "into simple and idiomatic English."

I may say here, in passing, that at Oxford and Cambridge, where the writing of English themes is not prescribed, good English in translations is much insisted on. Translation is, indeed, a valuable exercise in rhetoric, for the reason that it is purely rhetorical. The thought is furnished, and the translator is obliged to concern himself merely with the form. It may also be said, at the start, that the fitting schools do not appear to have any reasonable grievance, as against Yale, in this matter. If the college imposed requirements in English which were fantastic or eccentric, which changed from year to year, or were inconveniently different from those imposed by other colleges, there might be just ground of complaint. As it is, the task of the preparatory schools is made just so much the easier, as regards those of their scholars who are fitting for Yale, by the absence of any requirement whatever.

I may dismiss at once the charge that the failure to set a paper in English at the entrance examination argues indifference or hostility to the study. It is not the business of the universities to put the seal of their approval, or the brand of their disapproval, upon the curriculum of the schools. There are useful

studies pursued at the schools, concerning which the college makes no inquiry. We do not examine, for instance, in English history, in human physiology, in bookkeeping, music reading, mechanical drawing, or the Spanish language — all subjects which are taught, or might very properly be taught, in public high schools and private academies. What is the theory of an entrance examination? I take it to be this: it is to ascertain whether the candidate is prepared to go on profitably with the studies of the freshman year. It is not its purpose to determine the precise stage of mental development that he has reached. Now the studies of the freshman year at Yale are prescribed and are the same for all. They are Greek, Latin, mathematics, and either French or German. In these subjects, therefore, and in no others, the college makes sure, through its entrance examinations, that the incoming freshman has brought his work to the proper point of junction with the work of the first college year. Outside of these subjects he may have much or little knowledge; but this particular knowledge he must have, in order to keep up with his class, and beyond this we make no inquisition.

I am not saying that the curriculum of our

freshman year is an ideal one or a broad one; but while it remains as it is, it would be illogical to build the porch wider than the house. It is doubtless desirable that a boy should have learned a number of things, of which he will not be challenged to show knowledge at the threshold of the university. It is well, *e.g.* that he should know something of botany or some other natural science; something of modern European history, of Shakspere's plays, of the Old and New Testaments, of the Constitution of the United States. But so long as a knowledge of these does not lead up to and necessarily precede the studies of our freshman year, we do not examine in them, any more than we examine in general information, or in the topics of the day in the newspapers.

We object to loading our examinations with "fancy" subjects — with subjects which are not *de rigueur*. With the great increase in the size of our classes, accompanied by no corresponding increase in the number of our faculty of instruction; with the strain upon our resources caused by the opening of recruiting offices at a dozen different points, — the entrance examination is already a burden, and it becomes a matter of practical economy to avoid

adding to it. It is also a heavy burden to the intending freshman. He writes steadily for two days and a half, and his average age has risen six or eight months within the last twenty years. If the time ever comes when the prescribed curriculum of freshman and sophomore years is broken up into elective courses, the pressure of new subjects to get their claims recognized in the entrance examination will be met, as it is now at Harvard, by splitting up the examination. Greek will be made voluntary, and perhaps a part of the Latin and mathematics; and options will be allowed in the modern languages and physical sciences. Until this is done I, for one, am opposed to adding a single grain to the weight of our present requirements.

The reason why Yale imposes no entrance requirement in English now becomes obvious, and it is a very simple one. Until the present year the study of English literature and the historical study of the English language — including courses in Old and Middle English — have been entirely elective, and have been confined to the junior and senior years. This year an increase in our teaching force has made it possible to carry work in English literature proper back into the sophomore class,

where it is made a prescribed study for half of the year. The course given includes two plays of Shakspere, the lyrical poetry in Palgrave's "Golden Treasury," and selected prose essays from Addison to Matthew Arnold. At the same time, the rhetorical work of the sophomore class, in the shape of weekly praxis or extempore composition, has been greatly increased; and a similar weekly drill in theme writing has been extended through freshman year, where hitherto no English at all has been taught. But this advance has not yet bridged the gulf between the beginning of college life and the point where English language and literature are first seriously taken up as academic studies. The rhetorical work of freshman year presupposes no previous knowledge, and it seems unnecessary and vexatious to demand of candidates for the freshman class acquaintance with a subject which they are not called upon to continue or resume until after they have passed a whole year in college. When English shall have made good its claim to a place in the prescribed curriculum of freshman year; or when, instead of this, the curriculum of freshman and sophomore years shall have been broken up into elective groups, it will then, perhaps, be rational to demand of

the schools a preparation which will enable their pupils to begin the more advanced study of English with the beginning of the college course. I insert a "perhaps" here, because I am still in some doubt upon this point.

"For ten years past," said President Eliot, in his address before the Johns Hopkins University, February 22, 1884, "Harvard University has been trying, first, to stimulate the preparatory schools to give attention to English, and, secondly, to develop and improve its own instruction in that department; but its success has thus far been very moderate. So little attention is paid to English at the preparatory schools, that half of the time, labor, and money which the university spends upon English must be devoted to the mere elements of the subject." It certainly seems wasteful for a university to spend its energies in teaching the elements of any subject, unless it be of such a subject as requires a certain maturity of mind in the beginner, like mental science; or of such a subject as comparative philology, which presupposes some acquaintance with two or more languages. Rather than teach the elements of English in college, it would be better, perhaps, not to teach English in college at all. But here one is confronted with

a confusion in the use of terms. What are the elements of English? And what is meant by English? Are we not possibly talking here about two or three distinct things? In a sense, we may be said to teach the elements of English at Yale when we begin reading Shakspere with a class of sophomores, or an Anglo-Saxon primer with a class of juniors. We are not sure that any member of the former class has ever read a play of Shakspere before; and we are quite sure that for every member of the latter class, the Anglo-Saxon primer is his first introduction to the speech of Alfred. And yet, in another sense, we take it for granted that every boy who comes up to his entrance examination has been taught the "elements of English" in the primary school, or even in the nursery, and has been making daily use of the language for at least fifteen years.

When English is spoken of as a subject of instruction in schools and colleges, it may mean English literature or it may mean the English language. Reverting now to what has been said as to the purpose of the entrance examination, we do not examine in English literature, because an acquaintance with it is not essential to enable the student to carry on successfully the studies of our freshman year. On the other

hand, we do not examine in the English language because a knowledge of it is presumed. I do not mean, of course, a scientific or historical knowledge; I am not talking about English philology. I mean simply a practical, a usable knowledge; I mean that the student can read, write, and speak English, and understand it when spoken. Such a knowledge of it is necessary to him, since English is his instrument and the vehicle of all his future learning; such a knowledge of it is *all* that is necessary to him; and such a knowledge, we are sure, he does in fact possess.

But here I shall be met with protests. "You say there is no need of examining him in English because he knows it already. But how does he know it? Can he write it correctly, without grammatical or rhetorical solecisms? Can he express himself with precision and clearness in pure, forcible, graceful English?" To which it may be answered: He knows it ten times better than he will ever know any other language. He knows it so well that if he knew German and French one-half as well, he would be regarded as an accomplished linguist; and if he knew Greek and Latin half as well, he would be thought a wonderful classical scholar. He may be guilty of frequent

blunders in syntax and spelling; he may use a word, now and then, in a wrong meaning; his written style may be feeble, awkward, and bad in every rhetorical particular. But in spite of all this, he knows and employs the English language, for all practical ends, better than the most highly instructed foreigner. It is his birth tongue. And yet, upon this subject, one constantly meets with the most surprising statements. Thus Professor Hunt writes,[1] "The average graduate knows everything else among liberal studies better than he knows his own language and literature." And some one quotes from President Eliot to the same effect, "Upon leaving college he knows less of his vernacular than of any other language that has come before him." There is only one possible sense in which words like these can be true. If it be meant that the graduate has had a more thorough drill in the paradigms, constructions, and grammatical machinery generally of Greek and Latin and German than in those of his native speech, the fact is very likely to be so. Many college alumni might be found able to analyze λανθάνω and recite the list of prepositions which govern the Latin accusative, but quite unable to tell whether the verb *to buy* is

[1] *New Englander*, February, 1886.

weak or strong, or to give the rule for the use of *will* and *shall*. But if by knowing a language is meant the ability to understand it and use it, such assertions as I have quoted refute themselves. As to the other branch of the assertion — that the average graduate knows everything else better than his own literature — I will venture to say that, on the contrary, the chances are that he knows his own literature better than any other, though it may not have been taught him in the class room. Very probably he may not have been so carefully guided in his choice of reading in English as in some other literatures. He has not ground through English masterpieces a hundred lines at a time. Not unlikely he has read more of Homer than of Milton and more of Horace than of Pope; but it is safe to guess that, on the whole, he has read a hundred or thousand times as many pages of English as of all other languages put together; and that among these pages there can scarcely fail to be many which we should be justified in describing as literature; doubtless poems and novels of Scott, Byron, and Dickens, essays of Macaulay and Lamb, and some of the plays of Shakspere, to make a minimum estimate.

There is, then, one class of subjects on which

we do not examine, because a knowledge of them is not needed in the further pursuit of the prescribed college studies. To this class English literature belongs. There is another class of subjects on which we do not examine, because we presume an acquaintance with them sufficient for all practical purposes. To this class English language belongs. We do not examine in it for precisely the same reason that we do not examine in geography, spelling, United States history, and mental arithmetic. There used to be entrance requirements in geography and English grammar, but they were given up some years since. They had never been taken very seriously either by the examiner or the examinee. Students left them to the last, made a hasty cram review of them in two or three days, and then went into examination and fared with them as it pleased Heaven. Conditions were imposed in great numbers, but not very strictly held to. It was felt to be a rather hollow ceremony to compel young men of eighteen or nineteen to go back to a point in their education which they had passed four or five years ago, and get up once more their parsing and sentence analysis, the principal rivers in Asia, and the capitals of the Western states. The thing was a nuisance

and a farce. It took up room in the examination, and wasted the time of the instructors who read the papers. It was a relief when it was dropped, and nothing was lost by dropping it. It would be a pity if the history of entrance examinations in English should be like this; but I am afraid there is danger of it, if they are introduced prematurely and before we have ready a graded and systematized college course in English, beginning with freshman year, with which the courses in the fitting schools shall dovetail and to which they shall naturally lead up.

Thus far I have been trying to explain the reasons, of a practical and perhaps temporary kind, which make Yale College hold back from adding English to its entrance requirements. They are reasons growing out of the present constitution and limitations of its curriculum of studies. But I am aware that there are larger questions, questions of theory, lying back of these, which I have not discussed and which it may seem that I am seeking to evade. My readers want to put to me, no doubt, some such inquiries as these: Would you, if you could, introduce English as an elective or a prescribed study through all the four years of the college course; and, in

that case, would you require a certain amount of preparation in it for admission to college? In other words, would you, in President Eliot's phrase, give English "equal academic value or rank with any subject now most honored"? As a teacher of English, I shall possibly seem disloyal to my colors, if I hesitate to answer these questions in the affirmative. I have noticed that a professor of any branch of knowledge is apt to feel called upon to pose as a missionary for the spread of his own study; to claim for it a larger share than has yet been accorded it in educational systems; to lament, it may be, the "shameful indifference" with which it is treated by our leading colleges. I am not likely to undervalue a pursuit in which I have spent twenty years. But this kind of talk is so distasteful to me that I will rather belittle than magnify my apostolate. I will even acknowledge that I have no very decided answers to make to the questions which I have just supposed you desirous of asking me. I am ready, though not exactly urgent, to have the study of the English language and of English literature begun as an elective with the beginning of freshman year, and extend through the entire college course. I would then be ready to require candidates for admission to college,

intending to elect English in freshman year, to pass an entrance examination in the subject; though I am not clear in my mind as to the precise ground which such an examination should cover. The preparation in English recommended by the Commission of New England Colleges, and enforced by all the colleges in that league except Yale, does not appear to have satisfied either the colleges or the fitting schools. It has been constantly under fire, and has been attacked for the greatest variety of reasons. One seldom takes up an educational periodical without finding denunciations of the inconsistency, the superficiality, the vagueness, the difficulty, the lack of unity, etc., of the entrance requirements in English at our colleges. I will call attention here to one only of the latest expressions of this discontent, the article by Mr. Henry S. Pancoast in the February number of the *Educational Review*.[1]

[1] The teacher of a preparatory school writes to me as follows: "The position of Yale is certainly reasonable; I think it is wise. . . . A score or two of text-books diligently conned, full of clear, terse, correct English, have given the boy continual instruction in English through all his school days; and as continually he has, or should have, the watchful care of teachers jealous for good English. I cannot imagine conditions more favorable for cultivating the art of using a language. Our school gives more time than most

Furthermore, I would not, as at present advised, require English of all candidates for admission to college, but only of those intending to elect the study in freshman year; and I would permit these to substitute it, in the examination, for an equivalent amount of something else. I would not add it to the present requirements, which are exacting enough. Again, I do not feel disposed to make English a prescribed study in college, whether in the shape of literature or of language or of rhetoric and composition. I might possibly be willing to vindicate for English equal academic rank with any other study; but I should hesitate to claim for it that privileged and unique position which it holds in President Eliot's own university. It is understood that at Harvard the only exception to the universal prevalence of

schools do to classes in English. But we value this work, beyond the elements of grammar, chiefly as a means of awakening pupils to the worth and beauty of literature and somewhat cultivating their taste. In this work we desire the utmost liberty to choose the writings which most interest the instructor and in which he thinks he can get his pupils most interested. The colleges bother us with their specific assignments." Another master of a fitting school said to me: "I may tell you, in confidence, that I don't attempt any instruction in the English required. I tell the boys to read the books and that is all." Both of these schools prepare boys for Harvard and for other colleges that have an English requirement.

the voluntary system is the prescribed writing of themes. This is by reason of President Eliot's view as to the place occupied in a liberal education by the art of expression in the mother tongue. Most teachers have doubtless read the passage, in one of his addresses or reports, which is the *locus classicus* on this subject. I have not the words at hand to refer to, but I can readily be corrected if I am wrong. They declare in substance, if my recollection serves me, that a man who can speak and write his own language correctly is an educated man. It is open to any one to frame his own definition of education. But I should say that a man who had a thorough knowledge of, say, chemistry or political economy, or any other branch of liberal knowledge, though unable to write English without making many mistakes, would have a better education — *i.e.* a better intellectual equipment — than one who could express himself with correctness, or even with elegance, but who had nothing in particular to express.

As to the results to be got from prescribed work in composition or theme writing, I hold very paradoxical opinions. I am not, indeed, so radical on this point as an English professor of my acquaintance, who maintains that a man's

style is often injured, if not actually ruined, by composition work in school and college; that all the raciness is dried out of it. But I believe that, in proportion to the labor spent in the reading, correction, and criticism of themes, the returns are slight. The practice of writing is doubtless, in itself, of benefit to the student; but what he derives from his teacher's criticisms — beyond the merest matters of grammar and sentence structure — must be chiefly of a negative kind. The teacher can point out particular errors in the use of words and general besetting faults of manner. He can show him how *not* to do it, and I am far from denying the usefulness of this service. But when it comes to stimulus rather than repression, the blue pencil is "not in it." [1] Strictly speak-

[1] Schoolmasters' English — the English which boys writing themes are taught to use — is carefully denuded of all peculiarities, and among other things which it holds in horror is slang. Pedants, prigs, purists, precisians, and all dry-witted and thin-witted persons naturally hate slang, because it is alive. *Vous avez toujours haï la vie.* But men of rich natures love slang. It is the wild game of language. It abounds in imagination, humor, strength, comes warm from the lips of the people, and is the fresh product of the creative impulses by which all language was originally made. Nevertheless there is slang and slang, and a nice taste will discriminate. The chief abuse of slang is to make it a mask for intellectual poverty or laziness, by allowing its formulas to take the place of more precise expression. The vulgar have

ing, a student is never taught to write. He catches his style and does not acquire it. In part, it is his natural way of expressing himself, and, in part, it is the more or less conscious imitation of his favorite books. The literary art, like other arts, is mimetic; the young writer begins by saying things in the way in which he is accustomed to hear them said, adding to this the flavor of his own individuality. To make the student familiar with the best models of literary art is one of the best ways to start him in business on his own account. The use of models is insisted upon in the arts of design, and it is almost as useful in the art whose medium is words. This is why the study of literature, including the Greek and Latin classics, is more fruitful than that of formal rhetoric. The one proceeds by the method of concrete examples; the other by general rules and by analysis — a method more proper to science than to art.

But this is a longish digression, and I return to pick up a point which I dropped earlier in this paper, viz. the threefold division of English studies into rhetoric, philology, and lit-

no language but slang. As it is largely figurative, the best guide to its true use are the rhetorical rules for the employment of simile, metaphor, personification, etc.

erature. As to the barrenness of rhetoric, considered as a practical means for the training of the student in the art of composition, I have just expressed myself. But as a disciplinary study like logic, or as an engine of culture like "the higher criticism," — whatever that mysterious phrase may mean, — rhetoric has undoubted value, especially when associated with the study of authors like Aristotle and Longinus, as suggested by Mr. J. Churton Collins in his proposals for the constitution of a school of literature at the English universities. I would not stand in the way of the establishment of a graded elective course in rhetoric, beginning, say, with sophomore year and extending as far as might be thought desirable; preceded, possibly, by the prescribed study in freshman year of some elementary text-book — say, that by Professor Hill of Harvard. Or if it were thought best to begin the elective in rhetoric with freshman year, the elementary work might be done in the schools. The subject demands no greater maturity of mind than portions of the Greek and mathematics taught in school; and, being digested into a text-book, could be as easily handled as English grammar by any intelligent teacher.

As to English philology, or the historical and

scientific study of the language, probably all would agree that in its more advanced grades, including Old and Middle English, it is a subject for specialists, and should remain, as now, strictly elective. There is no good reason, however, why it might not be begun earlier in the college course. An elective in Old English (Anglo-Saxon) might be offered in sophomore year; and an elective, or perhaps a prescribed course in some elementary history of the English language, might be given in freshman year, as is now done in the Sheffield Scientific School. But, as already said, I would impose no entrance requirement in the English language; taking it for granted that every candidate who presents himself can read, write, speak, and understand his mother tongue more or less perfectly, and assuming also that he has learned his parts of speech in the primary schools.

I come now to literature proper, *i.e.* the study of English authors and English literary history, meaning, by literary history, whatever in the way of biography and of social or general history is needed for an intelligent reading of the texts studied. And here I confess I am in doubt as to what the ideal policy of the college with regard to an entrance requirement ought to be. I have no plan to bring forward with

any confidence. Without following very closely the annual reports of the Commission of New England Colleges, and without making a study of the entrance requirements laid down in the catalogues of the colleges themselves, — New England and others, — I have noticed that those requirements include the preparation of designated works such as "The Merchant of Venice," "Comus," the "De Coverley Papers" from *The Spectator*, "The Lady of the Lake," and this or that essay of Macaulay. I have noticed that the candidate's knowledge of the books prescribed, as well as his ability to write correct English, has been tested by requiring him to compose a short essay on some one or more topics taken from these. I have noticed finally that very vigorous objections have been made to the principle on which those books are selected and to the use which is made of them on examination. Mr. Pancoast, in the article already mentioned, thinks that the Commission jumps about too much, — from Bacon to Addison, from Tennyson to Dryden, etc., — and that there is no unity in the knowledge which a pupil gets from this kind of preparation. He thinks that the works selected for examination ought to have an orderly sequence, and that they ought to be linked together and set off by

a course in the English history of the periods to which they belong. I am not going to discuss his criticisms, which look reasonable upon the face of them; but it strikes me that the course in literature and history which he proposes, as a model or illustration, is going to add very seriously to the time occupied in preparing for college. Professor Hunt, too, in the article which I have already quoted once or twice, announces a rather ambitious programme for the average sub-freshman, when he says that he "should appear tolerably well acquainted with the history of the English language in its outline facts and periods: with a fair knowledge of English etymology and structure; with a substantial familiarity with the composite elements of the English vocabulary; and conversant with at least the primary facts of historical English literature from the time of Bacon."

I am not quite certain that I know what Professor Hunt means when he says that our sub-freshman should have a "substantial familiarity with the composite elements of the English vocabulary." Does he mean that he should know that English words are derived mainly from Anglo-Saxon, Latin, and Norman-French; and in smaller part from Norse, Celtic, Spanish, and many other tongues? That fact is quickly

learned. Or does he mean that the sub-freshman should be capable of picking out, in a given passage of modern English, the words which came from each of these various languages? That might be a job which would puzzle some who are not sub-freshmen. But a professor of rhetoric, writing of the possibilities of English in the schools, may be pardoned if a rose-colored mist occasionally settles upon his phrase.

The question whether the colleges should designate for examination particular works of particular authors, and if so, what works and of what authors, illustrates one difficulty in dealing with literature as a subject for academic studies and examinations. It would doubtless be something of a gain if an English instructor in college, in beginning this subject with his class, could be sure that they had all read, say, "The Merchant of Venice," "Comus," "The Deserted Village," "The Vicar of Wakefield," and Macaulay's essay on Byron. And yet it is not clear why the reading of these should be considered a necessary preparation for the reading of, say, the first book of the "Faërie Queene," "King Lear," "The Elegy written in a Country Churchyard," "The Rape of the Lock," "The Heart of Midlothian," "Henry

Esmond," and "The Idylls of the King." Why might not the student read this second set with ease and profit, even if he had never read the first set? Or, indeed, why should the reading of any one list of English poems, novels, and essays precede the reading of any other list? Should masterpieces be chosen first and writings of minor importance afterward, or how? There is no very obvious principle of gradation here. The Greek, Latin, French, and German authors read in preparation for college, or in college, are arranged without much trouble on a scale of difficulty. No one thinks of reading Thucydides before Xenophon, or Æschylus before Homer, or Tacitus before Cæsar. Instruction begins with the simpler authors and advances to the harder. But in works written in our own language it is not easy, nor is it perhaps advisable, to arrange our reading in any such order. Doubtless "Hamlet" presents harder problems for the youthful mind to grapple with than "The Merry Wives of Windsor"; the "Ode on the Intimations of Immortality" is more esoteric than "The Battle of Hohenlinden"; the poems of Donne, Shelley, and Browning are, in a sense, more "advanced" reading than the poems of their respective contemporaries, Spenser, Scott, and Longfellow.

And here I come to the real reason why universities and other learned bodies hesitate to give English literature equal academic rank with other subjects. It is not, they maintain, a scientific, but an æsthetic subject, a matter of taste and not of knowledge, and therefore not properly teachable. It is *belles lettres;* and, particularly among German scholars, who are great on method, *belletristisch* is an adjective of contempt. I quote from Mr. Collins's excellent little book on "The Study of English Literature" a few sentences from the *Times* report of the discussion in the Oxford Congregation in 1887, when it was proposed to establish a school of literature in the university, in which literature and not philology should have the greater weight in the distribution of honors. Professor Freeman, the historian, opposed the motion; he said "there were subjects not fit for examination; such were, *e.g.* questions of taste." Professor Earle, the university Professor of Anglo-Saxon, maintained that "the higher criticism was a thing *οὐδὲ διδακτὸν οὐδὲ ἐξεταστόν*" (a thing neither teachable nor examinable). And from a letter of Professor Freeman's in the *Times* for June 8, 1887, Mr. Collins further quotes as follows: "There are many things fit for a man's personal study which are not fit for

university examinations. One of these is 'literature' in the 'Lecturer's' sense. He tells us that it 'cultivates the taste, educates the sympathies, enlarges the mind.' Excellent results, against which no one has a word to say. Only we cannot examine in tastes and sympathies."

Such, then, are some of the objections which are made by university professors to the establishment of literature as a subject of coördinate academic rank with other subjects. They regard it as intangible, vague, invertebrate; as not admitting of scientific methods; as lending itself easily to dilettanteism: as not teachable, in short. The objection was put in familiar colloquial shape by the friend who said to me: "I don't see how you are going to teach Shakspere. I see how you might teach Chaucer, because the language of Chaucer is obsolete and has to be explained. But what is there to teach in Shakspere? Anybody can read Shakspere for himself." Mr. Collins is very scornful of these objections. But, as a teacher of English, I have felt their force. It is an immensely difficult subject to teach. It is not formulated in text-books; it does not offer problems for solution. It is not equipped with apparatus and with time-honored traditional methods. The teacher himself has to make the teaching.

In giving instruction in a foreign language, like Greek or German, the thing to be done is plain. The student must be taught to read the language. He is called upon to render a passage and to answer questions in construction and etymology. The teacher corrects his translation where necessary, calls attention to points that might be overlooked, — points of usage or verbal form or definition, — and then goes on to the next passage. But the task of the instructor in our native literature is far more complicated than this. There is no question here of translation; the language is given. His function is with subtler and more evasive entities than nouns and verbs; it is, as Professor Freeman says, with tastes and sympathies. The teacher is called upon, not to translate, but to comment, interpret, illustrate. Literature is an easy subject to lecture upon, but a hard one to teach. Nevertheless, I do not think it unteachable, although, after many years' experience, I do not feel at all sure that I know how it should best be taught.

An illustration of the difficulties that beset the attempt to give English equal academic rank with any other subject is afforded by Mr. Collins's proposals for the constitution of a school of literature in the universities. He is

evidently haunted by a misgiving that English literature, as a university study, is too limp to stand on its own feet and needs something else to stiffen it. This stiffening has commonly been supplied by philology. Mr. Collins very properly protests against studying English classics, not as the products of genius and art, but merely as illustrations of philological laws. The stiffening which he would supply is the comparative study of the English with the Greek, Latin, French, and Italian literatures. He adds a rhetorical or critical apparatus for such study: the application to English literary masterpieces of the principles laid down in Aristotle's "Poetics," Longinus's "De Sublimitate," the treatises of Quintilian, and the like. This is certainly what Matthew Arnold would have called a serious programme, though it has the air of borrowing its seriousness from outside, and recalls the time when the course in "English literature" in Yale College consisted of an analysis of Demosthenes, "On the Crown." Mr. Collins goes so far as to say that the true road to Shakspere is through Aristotle. When the mighty Stagirite has to be called in to justify the study of Shakspere, we are very near to giving up the whole contention.

LITERATURE AND THE COLLEGES

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THE men who created an American literature during the first two generations of the nineteenth century were, nearly all of them, college bred. Emerson, Hawthorne, Longfellow, Lowell, Holmes, Thoreau, were graduates. Cooper, Bryant, and Poe studied at Yale, Williams, and the University of Virginia, respectively, though they left before taking a degree. The only important exceptions were Irving and Whittier. I purposely confine the comparison to writers in the department of *belles lettres*, or imaginative literature. If orators and historians were included, the case in favor of the colleges would be even stronger.[1]

It needs but a glance at the names which have come to the front since the Civil War to assure us that this state of things has changed, and that now just the reverse is true. The men who have been making our literature during the last thirty or forty years are, as a rule, not college graduates. Bayard Taylor and

[1] Webster, Choate, Everett, Prescott, Bancroft, Motley, Beecher, Parkman, Phillips.

Walt Whitman, — who belong, as to date, on the border line between the older and younger generation, — Bret Harte, Clemens, Howells, James, Cable, Burroughs, James Whitcomb Riley, have taken none but honorary degrees. This list might be indefinitely extended without greatly influencing the generalization. Thus Mr. Stedman, Mr. Edward Everett Hale, and Mr. Warner are college men; Mr. Stoddard, Mr. Aldrich, and Mr. Gilder are not. And if the investigation were pursued through the literary directory, so as to take in the numerous clever contributors of fiction, essays, verse, and miscellaneous matter to the magazines, I believe that the ratio would hold.

The editor of the *Century*, "with the aim of encouraging literary activity among college graduates," has recently offered prizes for the best poems, essays, and short stories written by alumni of the classes of 1897–1900. In the remarks accompanying this offer (September, 1897), he says: "The *Century's* offer naturally brings up consideration of the often noticed fact that so few of our literary men, since the earlier days, have been college graduates. The writer some years ago made up a list of about forty of the then living prominent American authors. A very small proportion

of these were found to be college graduates. The proportion of that class of writers appears to be gradually increasing; but if a list were made of a dozen or fifteen of the men and women now at the head of American literature, the public would be surprised to find that there were so many more A.M.'s, L.H.D.'s and LL.D.'s than B.A.'s among them."

Naturally, this fact has not escaped notice, and naturally, also, it has been made the occasion of unfavorable comment upon an academic education. Why don't our colleges turn out any more Hawthornes and Lowells? And they are exhorted to bring up their English departments to a higher degree of efficiency. The *Century* says, *e.g.* "Doubtless the greater attention given of late in some of the colleges and universities to the study of literature, pure and simple, especially to English literature, is partly due to a knowledge of their own disproportionate representation in our modern authorship."

But I doubt this. I do not believe that college faculties are generally aware of this disproportionate representation, or that they would care much about it if they were.

There were no English departments when Hawthorne and Lowell were at college. English, as an academic study, had not yet been

invented. (I know the tradition about Professor Edward Channing at Harvard, and of his theme-correctings and of what he thereby did for American literature, and of how he pronounced Tennyson a great calf, etc., but I do not look upon this tradition as convincing.) Hawthorne and Lowell were fed on the good old curriculum, Greek, Latin, and mathematics, with a slight infusion of ethics, metaphysics, and natural science in senior year. And does any one really believe that the poor little Bowdoin College of the twenties accounts for Hawthorne's romances and Longfellow's poems? Or that early Dartmouth is responsible for the eloquence of Webster and the rhetoric of Choate?

The explanation must be sought, not in a decay of literary spirit at the colleges, — there has been no such decay, — but in the social advancement of the community at large, which has deprived the colleges of their educational monopoly. In the first half of the century, when high civilization was mostly confined to the Atlantic seaboard; when all our cities were provincial; when publishers hesitated to undertake a book by a native author; when newspapers and magazines paid little or nothing for literary contributions; the colleges were natu-

rally the rallying places of intellectual life in a greater degree than they are to-day. Every boy of bookish tastes and literary aspirations was sent to college as a matter of course ; and the colleges, though slenderly equipped, were numerous and gave an education cheaply. It is obvious how the means of an extra-academic culture have now been multiplied by the great modern newspapers and magazines ; by the ocean steamers which bring Europe to our doors, and the railway lines that make every part of our own territory accessible ; by the public libraries, lecture courses, galleries, theatres, museums, schools of art, language, technology, and music in our principal cities ; by the general growth in wealth and refinement of living. A glance at the list of names on any well-known publisher's advertising page will show how many of our recent men of letters have been educated by the opportunities of travel, and how many of them are graduates of the printing-press and the editor's desk, rather than of the university.

But it is asked, Why have not our colleges kept pace with this growth? With their greatly increased wealth, their numerous students, their liberal provision for elective courses and specialized work, their graduate fellow-

ships, their better equipment in every way, why do they not become radiating centres of literary influence? With all their concessions to the new sciences, their education is still prevailingly literary. Language studies and the sciences of man and mind still hold their old proportionate place. Greek, Latin, Sanskrit, comparative philology, the languages and literatures of the Aryan and Semitic races, history, sociology, ethics, logic, philosophy — all these branches are taught. Ample recognition of the mother tongue has at last been accorded, and there are courses in English and American poetry, in the drama, in the novel even. Æsthetics is no longer ignored; some of the universities have schools of music and of the fine arts. Well, with all this, where are your results? Where are your Emersons, Longfellows, Poes? Where are, etc., etc. And above all, what are your professors doing? Where are their contributions to our national literature?

A little thoughtful consideration of the relation between scholarship and literature will supply an answer to all these demands. The *Century* article touches the point when it says, "The direct efficacy of institutions, of academies, in the creation of artists in general, will

always be a matter of dispute." The truth is that a college as such, *i.e.* as a body of teachers and investigators, is never directly stimulative of creative work on the part of its scholars. It is not a guild of practical artists, like the Italian painters of the sixteenth century, or the English dramatists of Shakspere's time, working together, competing, imitating, learning from each other; a school of masters and disciples, fellow-craftsmen, bringing their product every day to the test of the market. The literary gift is the result of nature acted on by life. Scholarship, on the other hand, deals with books rather than life, is retrospective, critical, analytic. The old-fashioned text-books in rhetoric used to divide the subject into two parts, Invention and Expression. They had a great deal to say about the latter, but the chapter devoted to Invention was meagre. Of course: how could the text-book maker give rules for invention? He was generally, himself, quite unable to invent.

It would be strange if, among a body of university professors and learners, busy constantly with the things of the mind, in contact always with the great old standards of literary style, the artist's instinct and the power of fresh creation did not sometimes show them-

selves. And when they do, they have every chance of reduplication by interaction, sympathy, and the atmosphere of culture — "the still air of delightful studies" — always to be found at an ancient seat of learning. This happened at Harvard in the thirties and forties. Still the conditions were exceptional. "The Autocrat of the Breakfast-table" was not a consequence of Dr. Holmes's function in the Medical School, and the "Biglow Papers" cannot be credited altogether to the chair of Modern Languages. By the way, people continually talk of Longfellow and Lowell as if they had been professors of English literature, instead of the Romance tongues. They had nothing to do, as professors, with English literature or composition.

Colleges, then, are not apt to be forcing beds or breeding places of literature. It is the scholar's business to know and the teacher's to teach. The university teacher is generally expected, also, to enlarge the boundaries of knowledge in his sphere, to devote a part of his energies to original research. But he cannot reasonably be held to an obligation to do "creative" work. The teacher of literature, English or otherwise, may be fairly expected to inspire his students with an interest in the

subject, to train them to a higher appreciation of what they read and teach them to distinguish good from bad. He can hardly be called upon to stimulate them to original production. American colleges are not responsible for American literature.

But I will go farther and affirm that not only is the point of view of the scholar, the man of learning, quite different from that of the writer, the man of letters; it is usually antagonistic. This is strange, that the man whose life is spent in teaching and studying literature should feel, or affect, a contempt for the literary class. Yet it is not inexplicable. It is natural that one whose mind has been braced, whose taste has been cultivated to a nice severity by the study of the masterpieces of the world's literature, should be impatient of the popular acclaim which greets the last new novel. Scholarship makes a man fastidious, difficult, exacting of himself as of others, and checks the impulse to produce. The comparative barrenness of Gray's career at Cambridge is an instance of that palsy which sometimes overtakes the academic recluse, out of touch with life, growing in on himself, retiring more and more to "the far eastern uplands."

But it may be suspected that that distrust of

the ephemeral productions of the day which is often found among college dons is not always the sign of a superior taste. Sometimes it is a sign of blindness. It is much safer to praise an old book than a new. The old book has been duly labelled. Contemporary merit is uncertain as yet ; authorities have not stamped it with their approval. A dull man gets a certain advantage over a clever man, if he is able to compare him, to his disadvantage, with some much cleverer man who is already dead. Pope has satirized this affectation and has detected the real motive of it.

> " He who, to seem more deep than you or I,
> Extols old bards, or Merlin's Prophecy,
> Mistake him not; he envies, not admires,
> And, to debase the sons, exalts the sires."

It might be expected that teachers of literature — under which term should be included professors of ancient and modern languages as well as of English literature and rhetoric — would be, of all men, the most alert to discover and the most hospitable in welcoming whatever is best in the new literature of to-day. The proper attitude of one who lives with books, and by books, is one of respect toward the writer of books. Some day his successors will be lecturing their classes on the books now coming

out, just as he is now engaged in expounding and interpreting authors whom time has made classic. But scholarship has a Philistinism of its own and is not always liberal in its recognition of fresh talents. A song, a comedy, a tale which is a thousand years old and written in a dead language is worth serious study; but there is something frivolous, something hardly proper, about a song or comedy or tale written in modern English and published yesterday, possibly in a magazine — possibly, still worse! — by a man with whom we have personal acquaintance. Such literature is "popular"; it is not "academic."

But to say of any piece of literature that it is academic, is commonly to say about the worst thing that can be said of it; for it is equivalent to saying that it is dead. Correctness and refinement are the supposed attributes of academic work. But a refined corpse! And, as Dr. Johnson might have paraphrased the proverb, a lion which has lost the potentiality of continued existence is of inferior consequence to a dog in which the vital spirit is not yet extinct.

A professorship of *belles lettres* in an American college was to be filled, and a number of graduates who had won recognition by their writings were mentioned for the place. But

they were all rejected, as not sufficiently academic. One of them was a "dilettante," *i.e.* he had cultivated literature for the love of it, and not professionally. Another was a "bohemian," *i.e.* he had supported himself by writing for the magazines. A third was a "second-rate novelist"; a fourth was a "minor[1] poet," and so on.

[1] It is not obvious why a minor poet should be any more an object of derision than a minimus prose writer. Is poetry, then, the only art which it is forbidden to cultivate, unless the artist can reach supreme excellence? Of course, if the product be absolutely poor; but there are degrees, and it seems to me that I have known of minor essayists, minor critics, minor playwrights, painters, grammarians, sculptors, engravers, architects, musicians, enjoying a comfortable share of estimation. But the minor poet has no friends, and every one quotes Horace against him: —

"*Non Di, non homines*, — you know the rest."

His foes are of his own household. But it is fair to appeal from Byron to a passage of Wordsworth, for which I here propose a name: —

AN APOLOGY FOR MINOR POETRY

"If thou indeed derive thy light from heaven,
Shine, poet, in thy place, and be content.
The star that from the zenith darts its beams,
Visible though it be to half the earth,
Though half a sphere be conscious of its brightness,
Is yet of no diviner origin,
No purer essence, than the one that burns,
Like an untended watch-fire, on the ridge
Of some dark mountain; or than those which seem
Humbly to hang, like twinkling winter lamps,

Now here again is a strange thing. Some one who has written the life of a standard novelist, or edited the works of an old poet, is thereby thought worthy of a chair of literature in a university. But if the novelist or the poet were alive to-day, and were a candidate for the same chair, the university would none of him. His books are studied there, but he would not be suffered to expound them. Perhaps this is not so unreasonable as it looks. Not all creative authors would make good college professors. Very few professors of literature have done as much for literature as Goldsmith or Burns or Edgar Poe, and yet it is doubtful if any of these would be quite in place in a chair of English. Yet even in the case of these extremely unacademic representatives of the literary class, the disqualification would be rather personal than professional. Burns, to be sure, was no scholar, and it is not easy to fancy him lecturing to a roomful of Edinburgh undergraduates on "The Distinction between the Ayrshire and Kincardineshire Dialects of the Lowland Scotch." Goldsmith was superficial and Poe was not exactly learned, though each of them

Among the branches of the leafless trees.
Then, to the measure of the light vouchsafed,
Shine, poet, in thy place, and be content."

had the makings of a good critic; as witness the latter's "Rationale of Verse" and the former's "Enquiry into the Present State of Polite Learning in Europe," which has been recently reprinted in a critical edition.

Or take the highest names in English literary history. Milton's, of course, is a name which would recommend itself to a university position. He was a scholar in every conventional and academic sense. But would Shakspere's? Can we imagine him discoursing from the professor's chair on "Theories of Dramatic Construction"? His want of Latin and Greek is traditional, and he was a student of men rather than of books. And yet who doubts that that supreme intelligence could have bent itself to any task, and could have given us, had it chosen, a *theoria* of the art which it practised in such perfection? Shakspere has put into Hamlet's mouth an excellent lecture on the player's art. And, indeed, who can speak of art with more authority than the artist? The fact that the dramatist was himself a player might have shut him out from a college professorship, if we can conceive him seeking such a position. And yet we have recently seen a university audience listening eagerly to Joseph Jefferson expounding the principles of his profession.

For that Philistinism which looks askance upon "mere literature," and which is partly an inheritance of Puritanism and partly the ingrained contempt in the Anglo-Saxon race for the arts that minister to beauty rather than to utility, has been yielding of late even in the colleges, the citadels of ancient prejudice. The chairs of English in many American universities are now occupied by men who actually know how to write, who have written — written poems, stories, plays, and temerariously published them even in magazines; men such as Brander Matthews, George E. Woodberry, Pierce Egan, Bliss Perry, Henry Van Dyke, Barrett Wendell, Arlo Bates, Clinton Scollard. And I have not heard that any of them have been any the less useful as teachers, because they have also been practitioners of the literary art.

LITERATURE AND THE CIVIL WAR

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A CRITICAL journal of authority has pronounced the literary result of our Civil War unimportant and disappointing. And Mr. Stedman, in his very thorough review of American poetry, says: "The late Civil War was not of itself an incentive to good poetry and art, nor directly productive of them. Such disorders seldom are; action is a substitute for the ideal, and the thinker's or dreamer's life seems ignoble and repugnant." This same thought, of the superiority of life to art, of the deed to the word which records it, in every period of intense historical activity, — in what Matthew Arnold has called an age of concentration as distinguished from an age of expansion, — has been always entertained by the thinker and the artist. "The end of man," says Carlyle, "is an action, not a thought."

> "My life has been the poem I would have writ,
> But I could not both live and utter it,"

is Thoreau's complaint. And Lowell begins his "Commemoration Ode" with a like confession: —

> "Weak-winged is song,
> Nor aims at that clear-ethered height
> Whither the brave deed climbs for light."

As a poet just beginning to win the ear of the public when the war broke out, Mr. Stedman himself has felt the disturbing effect of which he speaks: "The Civil War was a general absorbent at the crisis when a second group of poets began to form. Their generation pledged itself to the most heroic struggle of the century. The conflict not only checked the rise of a new school, but was followed by a time of languor in which the songs of Apollo seemed trivial to those who had listened to the shout of Mars."

I once expressed my surprise to the veteran poet, Mr. R. H. Stoddard, at the slight impression made upon the general public by Mrs. Stoddard's novel, "The Morgesons," published in 1862. One seldom reads a novel twice. "The Morgesons" is not an easily forgettable book, yet I had read it at least four times and at intervals of years. But I had found few readers who knew it. Mr. Stoddard explained the fact by the date of

its publication. The war monopolized attention so entirely that no mere fiction had a chance. The newspapers were more exciting than any romance. "The Morgesons," after being out of print for years, was reissued in 1888, in a popular edition, and again in 1901. It has been publicly praised of late by Mr. Stedman as well as by Julian Hawthorne; but it has never recovered from the unfavorable circumstances of its first publication, nor overtaken that belated recognition which it missed a quarter century before. It finds a new school of fiction in possession of the field.

Indeed, in respect to fiction, the Civil War interposes a sort of crevasse between our earlier and our later literature. The spirit of the former age was lyrical, — dithyrambic almost, — and its expression was eloquence and poetry. The spirit of the present age is observant, social, dramatic, and its expression is the novel of real life, the short story, the dialect sketch. When Mr. James's "Passionate Pilgrim" appeared, in 1870, in the *Atlantic Monthly*, the signal seemed to be given for a newer and finer art in American fiction. Here was a novel attitude toward life, cool, dispassionate, analytic, sensitive to the subtler shadings not only of character, but of manners and speech, and reg-

istering the most delicate impressions; a new style, too, studied in some points from Hawthorne's, but less literary, more colloquial. The dialogue was not book talk, but the actual speech of men and woman in society. No art can be more exquisite for its purposes than Hawthorne's. But the persons of his romances are psychological constructions — types sometimes hardly removed from allegory — engaged in working out some problem of the conscience in an ideal world. His books are not novels in any proper sense.

As to the novels, properly so called, of antebellum days, how faulty they now appear in details, when put in comparison with the nicer workmanship of modern schools! "Uncle Tom's Cabin," — how crude it is! "The Leather Stocking Tales," — how rough in parts, and in parts how stilted! Judd's "Margaret," — how hopelessly imperfect as a work of art! Holmes's "Elsie Venner," — a delightful book, but quite impossible as a novel. Winthrop's "Cecil Dreeme," — poetic in conception, youthfully raw in execution. And yet all of these are works of undoubted talent.

The Civil War, in fact, wound up one literary era and set the seal to it. Our literature has since developed along different lines. It

would be unphilosophical to consider the writings produced during the four years of actual fighting, or those that have since been produced relating to the war itself, apart from the work of the thirty years of agitation which led up to the open outbreak of hostilities between North and South. The first series of "Biglow Papers," the speeches of Sumner and Phillips, belong as truly to the literature of the Civil War as do "Barbara Frietchie" and the Gettysburg Address. And this is recognized by Mr. Stedman when, to the passage already quoted, he adds this saving clause: "But we shall see that the moral and emotional conflicts preceding the war, and leading to it, were largely stimulating to poetic ardor; they broke into expression, and buoyed with earnest and fervid sentiment our heroic verse." And elsewhere, in writing of Whittier, he says: "He was the singer of what was not an empty day, and of a section whose movement became that of a nation, and whose purpose in the end was grandly consummated. We already see, and the future will see it more clearly, that no party ever did a vaster work than his party; that he, like Hampden and Milton, is a character not produced in common times; that no struggle was more momentous than that which

produced our Civil War, no question ever affected the destinies of a great people more vitally than the antislavery issue as urged by its promoters. Neither Greece nor Rome, nor even England, the battle-ground of Anglo-Saxon liberty, has supplied a drama of more import than that in which the poets and other heroes of our Civil Reformation played their parts."

If this be true, is it also likely to be true that such an occasion lacked its poet, — *caret sacro vate?* Here was a conflict involving not merely material interests, but high questions of right and wrong, fought by an educated people, a nation of readers and speakers, among whom literary talent is not uncommon. Is it to be expected that such a war will be barren of literary fruit? Or do we not instinctively listen, as the hosts draw near, for some echo of that

> "Dorian mood
> Of flutes and soft recorders; such as raised
> To height of noblest temper heroes old
> Arming to battle"?

Instead of seeking a direct answer to the question, let us for a moment strike into "the high *priori* road," and inquire what additions to literature are to be reasonably anticipated

from a civil war fought under modern conditions, and turning on such issues as negro slavery and the constitutional right of secession. Of war in general as literary material there is no need to speak. Fighting and love-making have furnished, between them, half the poetry of the world. Man is a fighting animal, and no arbitration treaties will ever eradicate the *gaudium certaminis*. It is the theme not only of the primitive epics, like the Iliad, the "Nibelungenlied," the "Chanson de Roland," but of the more modern and literary heroic poems which endeavor to reproduce the spirit of the ancient folk-songs. It is the theme of the Æneid, the "Orlando Furioso," the "Gerusalemme Liberata," the "Faërie Queene."

"Fierce wars and faithful loves," announces Spenser, following upon Virgil's "*Arma virumque*" and Ariosto's "*L'arme, gli amori.*" Milton felt himself obliged to introduce a military element into his theological epic in battles between the hosts of Michael and Satan which do not altogether escape the grotesque. If Lowell's saying is true, that the Odyssey is the only epic which is everywhere and always interesting, it is due to its exceptional character in this respect, and to the fact that the human

mind does sometimes tire of fighting and desire something else. There is much killing in the Odyssey, but no pitched battle; and there is a great deal more of sea wandering and of strange adventures among strange peoples, so that the poem is in effect, as has been said, a romance.

It is doubtful whether any modern war — any later than the crusades, for example — will lend itself to epic treatment. Certainly Tasso's poem, which dealt with the capture of the holy city, was not quite a success, and Voltaire's "Henriade" was a flat failure. Perhaps the epic, as a literary species, is extinct, anyway, like the dodo and the mastodon. That legendary remoteness, that primitive and heroic state of manners, that anonymous character, that mixture of popular superstition, which distinguish the ancient epic and saga literature are no longer procurable. We know too much about modern wars. How can an epic be made out of a war in which we have the military history of every campaign and battle, — despatches, bulletins, reports, statistics of killed, wounded, and captured, articles in the newspapers by special correspondents, strategical and tactical criticisms of operations by professional authorities? A certain unfamiliarity is necessary for

picturesque effect. The day is still distant when torpedo boats will seem to the poet as available properties as the galleys of Salamis, or bicycles and gun-carriages as the chariots of Achilles and the car-borne heroes of Morven. I recall now a saying of one of my elders, when reading aloud from a newspaper report of one of the battles of our Civil War. He said it would be impossible for the future poet of the war to deal effectively with the names of our battle-fields. "What can he do with such names as Bull Run, Pig's Point, Ball's Bluff, Paddy's Run, and the like?" Possibly the remark was trivial, possibly untrue. Thermopylæ, after all, means nothing more than "hot gates." But the point illustrates the stubbornness of modern warfare as epic material.

If we may not expect, then, a great narrative poem founded on the events of the American war, may we not look with confidence for some historical novel, or a series of such, when time shall have given the required perspective, and the large, significant, dramatic aspects stand forth in outline, freed from prosaic circumstance? The historical romance — an invention of Walter Scott — is perhaps the nearest modern equivalent of the ancient epic.

The hand-to-hand combats of Homeric heroes, the encounters of mediæval knights, are themes for the poet. The evolutions of modern armies find their more appropriate vehicle in prose. Macaulay pointed out the absurdity of most of the poems called forth by Marlborough's victories, in which the English general was described in conventional epic language as overthrowing the enemy by the prowess of his single arm. And although he praised Addison for discarding this fiction in his "Campaign," those who have read it know that Addison cannot be entirely acquitted of the same mistake. Thackeray had his laugh at Southey's very uninspired verses on Waterloo; and of the most famous passage in British poetry relating to that gigantic conflict, it is not the reflections of Childe Harold upon the battle-field itself, but the description of the Duchess of Richmond's ball at Brussels, on the night before Quatre-Bras, that is famous. Indeed, the lyric rather than the epic mood would seem to be that in which the most successful war poetry of modern times has been conceived. Campbell's "Hohenlinden" and "Battle of the Baltic," Tennyson's "Charge of the Light Brigade," Browning's "Incident of the French Camp," and Thompson's "High Tide at Gettysburg" do all, to be

sure, tell a story; but they are lyrical in form and spirit. While of narrative poems like Macaulay's "Lays of Ancient Rome" — in which the form of the popular minstrel ballad, partly lyric, partly epic, and partly even dramatic, is adopted — it is to be observed that the kind of warfare which they describe is not modern, but ancient, Homeric in fact, the single combats of chieftains renowned for bodily strength and personal valor.

There are many spirited relations of battles, sieges, naval engagements, marches, and retreats, in historical fiction, such as Hugo's Waterloo, Tolstoi's Borodino and retreat from Moscow, and Zola's Sedan; while many pages in the historians, like Motley's chapters on the siege of Antwerp and Froude's on the defeat of the Armada, are as brilliant as anything in romance. On these frontiers history and fiction touch hands. The novelist has to get up his facts, the historian to exert his imagination; and each must use his utmost art to paint a graphic scene. But in general I believe it to be true that battle descriptions are tedious. In reading Carlyle's "Frederick," it is gradually borne in upon one that war maps are a weariness to the flesh, and one battle is very like another. One of the most vivid impres-

sions that I have received of Waterloo was derived from that old French novel, "La Chartreuse de Parme." The author, De Stendhal (Henri Beyle), had the originality not to attempt a general view of the action. His hero, a young Italian noble, has run away from home, possessed with revolutionary enthusiasm and enamoured of Napoleon's glory. He arrives upon the field while the fight is going on, and hovers about the edge of it, trying to join some French regiment. At one time he comes within a few yards of Wellington and his staff. He never actually succeeds in getting into the battle, but his experiences and adventures upon the fringes of it convey an excellent notion of the vast confusion of the whole, together with near-at-hand glimpses of characteristic details: a wounded man dropping out and going to the rear; an orderly with despatches skirting the army of the allies; a disembowelled horse in a furrow; a peasant unconcernedly ploughing in the next field; a squad of men on picket duty or waiting the signal to go in, and meanwhile —not being under fire—busy over a game of cards. It is a battle scene piecemeal and by sample. Stephen Crane's "Red Badge of Courage" gives a remarkably realistic view of the circumstance as distinguished from the

pride and pomp of glorious war, — our own war. It is the unheroic side of it, the side seen by the private soldier, very much disposed to grumble, and not seldom inclined to run away; unaware of the large movement of the battle, but intensely alive to the discomforts and risks of his own little corner of it. The narrative is as convincing as if it were the record of a personal experience, though the author was not born, I believe, until after the close of the Civil War.

It cannot be said that as yet the Scott or Tolstoi of the American Civil War has arrived. I have rummaged among shelves full of novels, more or less historical, dating from that period; but, with here and there an exception like Major De Forest's excellent "Miss Ravenel's Conversion," they are already obsolete. Has the reader of to-day ever chanced to hear of "Bullet and Shell," for example; or of George Ward Nichols's story, entitled "The Sanctuary," or of "Inside, a Chronicle of Secession," by W. P. Baker, a name not unknown to novel readers;[1] or of "The Three Scouts," by J. T. Trowbridge, who is certainly not an obscure person? Perhaps we are not yet far enough away from the war for the purposes of the historical novelist.

[1] See "The New Timothy," "His Majesty Myself," etc.

He must wait till more atmosphere has accumulated between himself and his subject, and mellowed the sharp edges of fact; till the disentangling process has gone farther, and the significant and dramatic features have been selected out by time. Already the process has begun. Certain leaders, turning points, battles and localities, particular mottoes, sayings, catchwords, have impressed themselves upon the national memory. They have become salient, and the rest have receded into the background. Upon these points the imagination has fastened: tradition begins to crystallize about them; in time they may grow almost legendary. Harper's Ferry, the Shenandoah Valley, the prison pen at Andersonville, the deaths of Stonewall Jackson, Ellsworth, Winthrop, and Shaw, the battle of Gettysburg, the proclamation of emancipation, Sherman's march to the sea, Sheridan at Winchester, the fight between the *Monitor* and the *Merrimac*, the murder of Lincoln, — some quality of picturesqueness has attached itself to these, and to a number of other men, places, and incidents; and it is such as these that will furnish material for the future poet or romancer.

In the recent revival of historical fiction the Civil War has had its share. A single year

has witnessed three noteworthy additions to this department: Mr. Winston Churchill's "The Crisis," Mr. Owen Johnson's "Arrows of the Almighty," and Mr. George W. Cable's "The Cavalier." It is interesting to compare the first of these — the best selling novel of the season — with a book written so long ago as 1867. "Miss Ravenel's Conversion," whose author was an officer in the Union army, is an honest, solid, old-fashioned story; a little encumbered in its movement, but veraciously reflecting the confusion and uncertainty of the time, and the clash of opposing principles and passions. Major De Forest was near to the events described, and was therefore under the necessity of being discreet. The time had not yet arrived for "historical portraits." General Butler looms dimly in the background. Some incidents of the Red River campaign are worked into the plot. The action oscillates between New Orleans and New Haven, but the latter place is thinly disguised under the pseudonym of New Boston, in the state of Barataria.

In "The Crisis," on the other hand, the local color, which is laid on thick, is frankly of St. Louis. Full-length figures of Lincoln, Grant, and Sherman occur, in accordance with the Waverley formula for the construction of his-

torical romance; and the censorious reader who knows the slang of the sixties can please himself with detecting anachronisms like "nickel," "sand," and "What are you giving us?" These are trifles, but possibly the *laudator temporis acti* who declines to accept them will also refuse his assent to the saliences of Mr. Churchill's Lincoln and Mr. Churchill's Sherman.

To turn now from historical fiction to the distinct but kindred art of the historian, it is clearly too early for the final history of the war to be written, — that great Thucydidean work which we may with all confidence predict, at once an impartial narrative of events, a philosophical exposition of causes and results, and a piece of literary art. The generation that fought the war has not yet passed away, and every day it is recording its memories of the conflict. Beginnings have been made by writers like Greeley, Draper, Stephens, the Comte de Paris, and others, but their books are partial and premature, — little more than *mémoires pour servir*. Meanwhile material grows fast: in compilations like the eleven volumes of Frank Moore's "Rebellion Record"; in serials like the *Century's* "Battles and Leaders of the Civil War"; in countless regimental histories, military biographies, journals, letters,

and reminiscences, by statesmen, ambassadors, generals, private soldiers, refugees, hospital nurses; by Cabinet ministers, Federal and Confederate, who disclose the secret diplomacies and policies of innermost government circles; by women who reveal the domestic economies of households in besieged cities and on impoverished plantations. "The real war," said Walt Whitman, "will never get in the books." He meant, of course, that no dignified, formal history, dealing with things in their *ensemble*, will ever give a notion of the details of private suffering, individual sacrifice, personal heroism, which are known only to eyewitnesses and participants. For perhaps the best way to study history is in the documents. Contemporary chroniclers, like Joinville, Villehardouin, and Froissart, have a secure advantage in point of vividness. But surely the American war is not unfurnished of such. And many of the actors in, many of the observers of it, were skilful writers, able to turn their impressions into literature. I may instance, in passing, such papers as Theodore Winthrop's "Washington as a Camp"; Colonel Higginson's "Army Life in a Black Regiment"; Dr. Holmes's "My Hunt after 'The Captain'"; and Walt Whitman's hurried

but singularly picturesque jottings of camp and hospital life in "Specimen Days" and "Democratic Vistas," particularly his description of the assassination of Lincoln.

As the war recedes farther into the past, we are enabled to see more clearly not only its political importance as a crisis in the history of popular government, but likewise its availability for poet, dramatist, and romancer. There were spectacular things in it, — the spectacle, for example, of the liberation of a race from bondage. A crusading spirit animated the Union armies.

"As he died to make men holy, let us die to make men free."

Or read Whittier's "Laus Deo!" "On hearing the bells ring on the passage of the constitutional amendment abolishing slavery."

"Let us kneel:
God's own voice is in that peal.

* * * * * * *

"Loud and long
Lift the old exulting song;
Sing with Miriam by the sea,
He has cast the mighty down;
Horse and rider sink and drown;
'He hath triumphed gloriously!'"

Again, what act upon the scene of history, what climax on the mimic stage, was ever more sub-

limely spectacular than the death of Lincoln? "Memorable even beyond credit," as Bacon said of the last fight of the *Revenge*, "and to the height of some heroical fable." Not Charles on the scaffold, not Bonaparte on his island, not Henry under the dagger of Ravaillac, enacted such a high-tragedy end. Such a tragedy it was that not even its histrionic surroundings, nor the cheap melodramatic posturing of the vain mime who was the paltry occasion of it, had power to vulgarize its dignity. If a dramatic poet had composed the war, could he have imagined a more effective close than history did, when she set the seal of death on the work of her protagonist in his hour of triumph, and consecrated him forever with the halo of martyrdom? It would be strange if the poets had missed this occasion, nor did they. Lowell, in his "Commemoration Ode," has touched it nobly; and Whitman, with a more intimate tenderness, in the only one of his poems which is really popular: —

"O Captain! my Captain! rise up and hear the bells;
Rise up — for you the flag is flung — for you the bugle trills,
For you bouquets and ribboned wreaths — for you the shores acrowding,
For you they call, the swaying mass, their eager faces turning;

Here Captain! dear father!
This arm beneath your head!
It is some dream that on the deck
You've fallen cold and dead.

"My Captain does not answer, his lips are pale and still,
My father does not feel my arm, he has no pulse nor will,
The ship is anchored safe and sound, its voyage closed and done,
From fearful trip the victor ship comes in with object won;
Exult O shores, and ring O bells!
But I, with mournful tread,
Walk the deck my Captain lies,
Fallen cold and dead."

But there is more to a war than fighting. In every great war certain leaders, civil and military, come forward on either side, certain imposing personalities, who embody and represent the ideals in conflict. Already these have emerged from the crowd, and our future poet or romancer will find them ready drawn to his hand. There is no need to attempt again the portrait of Lincoln. It has become a part of the national consciousness. But it is worth noticing that among the foremost contributors of the literature of the Civil War was the chief actor in it. The Gettysburg speech is now a classic, and is committed to memory by the children of our public schools. Hardly less

classic are his numerous sayings, with their homely sagacity and their humor which endeared the President to a nation of humorists. Such phrases as "government of the people, by the people, for the people," are not more familiar than the caution not to swap horses while crossing a stream; or the maxim, "You can fool some of the people all the time, and all of the people some of the time, but you can't fool all of the people all the time;" and many others than which Bacon said nothing wiser and Sydney Smith nothing wittier. Even the rougher and more broadly comic facetiæ of the war time — the fooleries of Josh Billings, Petroleum V. Nasby, and Orpheus C. Kerr — are not without an historic value. We cannot quite consent to Matthew Arnold's dictum that our humorists are a national calamity.

And this reminds me that the same fastidious critic, after reading Grant's memoirs, found him lacking in distinction. Colonel Higginson says that Matthew Arnold never understood the Americans. Grant was unquestionably the second great personality on the Northern side developed by the Civil War; and his book, the record of this personality, is one of its greatest literary monuments. Does it, or did the character of its author, lack distinction? It is easy

to see what the English scholar meant by his charge. But it is wrong to weigh such a work in mere æsthetic balances. More exclusively than Lincoln, Grant was the man of action, of executive genius. His fibre was less fine, his nature less various, and he had not in equal degree the gift of expression. To a man of scholarly pursuits, there might well seem a certain commonness about his tastes, his intellectual habits, his companionships. Yet in many ways it seems to me that Grant's mind and character were of high distinction. The simplicity, the modesty, that were among his prominent traits are reflected in his book, and they always tend to make good writing. And whatever his want of æsthetic sensitiveness may have been, there was a moral delicacy which well supplied its place. One remembers the current anecdote concerning the officer who was about to tell a risky story because, as he said, there were no ladies present; and was stopped by the general's quiet rebuke, "But there are several gentlemen present." As a mere writer he was far superior to Cromwell, with whom as a military leader he had some traits in common, such as tenacity, confidence, and the power to inspire it in others, and a genius for wide combinations. Cromwell's letters and

speeches are confused almost to the point of being inarticulate; and in spite of that powerful religious emotion which lifted his utterances high above commonness or middle-class Philistinism, his constant use of the Puritan verbiage leaves upon the modern reader a disagreeable impression of unctuousness. It is in better taste to do God's will without an incessant reference in words of one's every action to God.

Upon the Confederate side, the most striking personalities were, perhaps, Stonewall Jackson, a Southern Puritan, and Lee, who embodied very nobly the Virginian ideal, — the Cavalier tradition, — and who inherited those social graces denied to men of the people, like Lincoln and Grant, but which were naturally included in Mr. Arnold's definition of "distinction." The President of the Confederacy, on the other hand, is not a sympathetic figure in the picture of the war. Mr. Davis was an upright and able man, but there was something rigid, narrow, and bitter about him. If the Confederacy had succeeded, he never could have become as dear to his people as Lincoln would have been to the North even in defeat.

Let us now put ourselves the question whether there was anything about the Ameri-

can conflict which would recommend it especially for poetic or literary handling. Not all wars are poetic. Apart from the pomp, pride, and circumstance which are the commonplaces of military life, apart from the dangers and chances of battle, and the opportunities for the display of individual daring and devotion, war is not always heroic. Wars of conquest or selfish aggression, like Frederick the Great's and Napoleon's; diplomatists' wars, which are made by governments, and not by peoples; even popular wars, in which old national enmities and the mere brute fighting instincts are unchained, — like the Hundred Years' War between England and France, and the last French and German war, — these may be imposing by the scale of their operations or the generalship shown, but they have no message for the soul. They produce no precious and lasting literature. Surely pieces like Addison's "Campaign" and Prior's "Ode on the Taking of Namur" were a very paltry result of Marlborough's brilliant victories. Southey's little poem, "The Battle of Blenheim," exposed the nothingness of it all.

"'It was a famous victory,"

but it meant nothing, it settled nothing. All Alexander's conquests left no such mark on

literature as the defensive stand of the Greeks at Thermopylæ and Marathon. The English invasions of France in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries are not responsible for much poetry. Shakspere's "Henry V" and Drayton's spirited ode on the battle of Agincourt are the best that the English have to show for that business. On the other hand, consider how the one heroic figure of those wars, the Maid of Orleans, whom the old chronicle play of "Henry VI" treats with such coarse brutality, — consider how Joan of Arc has inspired, and is today inspiring, the poet, the painter, the sculptor, the romancer, the historian. I never could believe that Shakspere wrote "Henry VI," not only for other and critical reasons, but because, in spite of national prejudice, he never could have so missed a great dramatic opportunity.

Truly patriotic wars, wars for freedom, for national defence, such as was that war of the French against the foreign invader; such as was the Greek resistance to Persia; such as was the German war of liberation in which Theodore Körner fought and sung; such as were the wars of Wallace and the Bruce; such as was our own Revolution and the wars of the French Republic in its early days, when it stood

on the defensive, and faced and beat Europe, — these are the stuff of which literature is made.

I have said that not all wars are poetic. Milton, who, like Heine, was a valiant soldier in the war for liberation, acknowledged this in his most martial sonnets.

> "For what can war, but endless war still breed?"

he asks, and says again, "Peace hath her victories." But Tennyson, in disgust at the frauds and corruptions of a stagnant peace, would fain persuade us that blood-letting is in itself a purge for the diseases of a selfish, commercial society: —

> "Better, war! loud war by land and by sea,
> War with a thousand battles, and shaking a hundred thrones!
>
> "For I trust if an enemy's fleet came yonder round by the hill,
> And the rushing battle-bolt sang from the three-decker out of the foam,
> That the smooth-faced snub-nosed rogue would leap from his counter and till,
> And strike, if he could, were it but with his cheating yardwand, home."

And so he sends his young man in "Maud" off to the Crimea. Truly the charge at Balaklava was *magnifique* even though it was not *la guerre;* but what inspiration could the poet find in such

a *cause?* The Crimean war was not a crusade, a holy war; it was a most unholy war, a mistake, a mere struggle of material interests and political ambitions, — what I have called a diplomatists' war.

Next to patriotic wars, wars for national independence or existence, those most fruitful in literature have been in the wide sense of the word, *Culturkämpfe:* contests of religion or of opposed principles and ideas, such as the crusades, the long struggle between the Christians and Moors in Spain, the wars of the Protestant Reformation all over Europe, the conflict of democracy with feudalism which centred in the French Revolution. And this is also true — is especially true — of civil wars. We find a striking example of it in comparing the two great civil wars of English history: the York and Lancastrian feud of the fifteenth century, and the Great Rebellion — as Clarendon calls it — of the seventeenth. I call the former a feud, because it was, in fact, nothing but a gigantic family vendetta, a dynastic quarrel, in which no principle was at stake, and which involved, like all vendettas or domestic feuds, horrible treacheries and cruelties: stranglings in prison, murders of captives, wholesale proscriptions and forfeitures. The nobility was

decimated, but the people cared nothing about the cause of the strife. "A plague of both your houses" doubtless expresses the popular attitude. What has all this contributed to literature? Practically a single figure, Shakspere's Richard III, — a dramatic creation rather than an historical verity, embodying in himself the craft and bloodthirstiness of a whole epoch of turbulent, meaningless confusion. Does any one ever read Daniel's long poem, "The Civil Wars"? Or "Bosworth Field," by Sir John Beaumont, a cousin of the dramatist? Wordsworth, indeed, borrowed a line from Beaumont in his "Song at the Feast of Brougham Castle," though it was to celebrate, not the martial exploits of the Cliffords, but the peaceful virtues of that "good Lord Clifford" who had been reared as a shepherd, and in whom, under the softening influences of nature,

> "the savage virtue of the race,
> Revenge, and all ferocious thoughts, were dead.
>
> "Love had he found in huts where poor men lie;
> His daily teachers had been woods and rills,
> The silence that is in the starry sky,
> The sleep that is among the lonely hills."

No, the wars of York and Lancaster have no moral interest for us to-day: they are "full of

sound and fury, signifying nothing." But because, by a lucky chance, the white and the red rose became the insignia of the hostile houses, some poetry has, in later times, attached itself, not to the dark struggle, but to its floral symbols; and we have, for example, such a "lily in the mouth of Tartarus" as those famous stanzas on "The White Rose sent by a Yorkist Lover to his Lancastrian Mistress."

> "If this fair rose offend thy sight,
> Placed in thy bosom bare,
> 'Twill blush to find itself less white
> And turn Lancastrian there."

This is pretty, but *ce n'est pas la guerre.*

Colonel Deming, of the 12th Connecticut, who was military mayor of New Orleans under General Butler, used to deliver a lecture on "The Passage of the Forts." His regiment went up the river on the transports which followed in Farragut's wake, and was quartered for a few days in Fort Phillips. The fort had been knocked to pieces by Porter's shells. In a fragment of one of these, which had partly buried itself in the earthworks, a wild pigeon had made its nest; and Colonel Deming suggested the incident to our Hartford poetess, Mrs. Sigourney, as a good subject for a poem. Mrs. Sigourney might have done something

with it; or so might Longfellow, who was not above dealing with the rather obviously emblematic. But this is not what I mean by the poetry of war.

Take, now, by way of contrast to the Wars of the Roses, the English civil war of the seventeenth century, and think of what it has given and is still giving to literature: half of the Waverley Novels, with the songs of the Cavaliers — Lovelace, Suckling, Montrose — and of modern poets who have continued the vein, — Burns, Aytoun, Browning. This on the side of Church and King; and on the Parliament side Milton, — a literature in himself, — to say nothing of Puritan poets such as Marvell and Wither, books like Lucy Hutchinson's memoirs of her husband, and modern things like Victor Hugo's "Cromwell." Why are these wars so perennially interesting to the human mind? Not merely because of the political importance of the constitutional questions at issue between the Stuarts and their parliaments. Poetry does not easily attach itself to questions of prerogative and privilege, to petitions of right, exclusion bills, and acts of uniformity. It is because this was not a mere struggle of factions, but a war of conscience, which aroused all that is deepest in man's nature. It was the shock of

opposed ideals, — ideals not only in government and religion, but in character, temperament, taste, social habit, and the conduct of life.

> "Roundhead and Cavalier!
> Dumb are those names erewhile in battle loud."

Yes, dumb are the names, but the things subsist. There are Roundheads and Cavaliers today: there is room for them both in our now tolerant society, which allows a man to pursue his ideals in peace, but forbids him to impose them forcibly upon his neighbor.

Now apply these tests to our own Civil War. Was it, as Carlyle said, nothing but "the burning of a dirty chimney"; or was it, as Carlyle came later to acknowledge, a crisis in the eternal warfare of right with wrong, of civilization with barbarism? On each side were the grandeur of high convictions, and that emotional stress which finds its natural utterance in eloquence and song. To the South it appeared as a war of national defence, — a war in resentment of interference with local rights and social conditions. And this was the constant cry of the Southern writers during the war: "Repel the invader. Clear the sacred soil of him. Let the North take its hands off us. Let it mind its own business." On the Northern side

the patriotic motive was the preservation of the Union; and here the great speeches of Webster, the Reply to Hayne and the Seventh of March Speech, memorized and declaimed by thousands of schoolboys throughout the North, became influential against secession, and belong properly to the literature of the war.

But what supplied the fire to the Northern cause was the moral enthusiasm of the anti-slavery reformers. This underlay the constitutional question, just as the religious issue in the Cromwellian wars underlay the political issue. In each case the political issue was really subordinate. Charles would not have broken with Parliament if Laud had not tried to prelatize the Church and met resistance. South Carolina would not have seceded if she had not thought that slavery was threatened. In his addresses at Liverpool, Manchester, Glasgow, Mr. Beecher was always trying to convince the British public that the war for the Union was, at bottom, a war for the abolition of slavery; and he was right. Hence the solemn fervor, the religious zeal, the moral indignation, of our war poets and war orators; their appeal to God, their Biblical speech, their Hebrew spirit. Whittier's "Voices of Freedom" and poems "In War Time" are like the sound

of the trumpet blown before the walls of Jericho, or the words of the prophets denouncing woe upon Amalek. Here are the Roundheads again, then, under new conditions; here is the old Miltonic, the old Puritan strain once more. Once more here is the "good, old cause," and the sword of the Lord and of Gideon, and we seem to hear Cromwell exclaiming, as the fog rose on the "armèd mountains of Dunbar," "Let God arise, and let his enemies be scattered; like as the sun riseth, so shalt thou drive them away!" This Hebraic temper and this Scriptural phrase are a constant note in the war poetry of the North.

"Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord,"

opens Mrs. Howe's "Battle Hymn of the Republic," set to the Hallelujah chorus of the John Brown marching song. My fellow-townsman, Henry Howard Brownell, who was private secretary to Commodore Farragut, on whose flagship, the *Hartford*, he was present during several great naval engagements — Henry Brownell, I say, was by no means a Puritanical nor a theologically given person. He was, on the contrary, an easy-going gentleman, of liberal opinions and social, not unconvivial

habits. But in his War Lyrics, when the old Free-Soil rage came upon him, he could be as apocalyptic in manner as Garrison or Whittier: —

"Full red the furnace fires must glow
That melt the ore of mortal kind:
The mills of God are grinding slow,
But ah, how close they grind!
To-day the Dahlgren and the drum
Are dread apostles of his name;
His kingdom here can only come
By chrism of blood and flame."

And it is curious to see how this same exalted utterance, this same Biblical language, is caught by a Southern poet, when he confesses that the future belongs to the North, and that the Northern sword was the sword of the Lord and of Gideon. I allude to the Confederate soldier Will Thompson's "High Tide at Gettysburg," one of the best poems of the war: —

"God lives! He forged the iron will
That clutched and held that trembling hill."

In general, it is not unfair to say that the South was as badly overmatched at the lyre as at the sword. Timrod and Hayne may perhaps offset such poets as Brownell and Forceythe Willson and the author of "The Blue and the Gray," but they are no names to put against Whittier and Lowell. Certain passages in Low-

ell's "Commemoration Ode" are thus far the high-water mark of our war poetry, — the third strophe, "Many loved Truth," etc., the close of the eighth strophe, and the passionate exordium: —

"O Beautiful! my Country! ours once more!
Smoothing thy gold of war-dishevelled hair
O'er such sweet brows as never other wore,
And letting thy set lips,
Freed from wrath's pale eclipse,
The rosy edges of their smile lay bare,
What words divine of lover or of poet
Could tell our love and make thee know it,
Among the Nations bright beyond compare?
What were our lives without thee?
What all our lives to save thee?
We reck not what we gave thee;
We will not dare to doubt thee,
But ask whatever else, and we will dare!"

"A great literature," says Walt Whitman, "will yet arise out of the era of those four years, those scenes — era-compressing centuries of native passion, first-class pictures, tempests of life and death — an inexhaustible mine for the histories, drama, romance, and even philosophy of peoples to come; indeed, the vertebra of poetry and art (of personal character too) for all future America, far more grand, in my opinion, to the hands capable of it, than Homer's Siege of Troy, or the French wars to Shakspere."

EMERSON'S TRANSCENDENTALISM

EMERSON'S TRANSCENDENTALISM

If people who write essays on Emerson would only stop saying fine things about him and tell us what he means, they would do more service to criticism. It is significant, by the way, that the question asked about Emerson is, What does he *mean?* and about Carlyle, What does he *want?* Both of these questions were put by plain people a generation ago. Answers enough were forthcoming — but in the shape of fresh oracles. The plain people were told, among other things, that the ideas of the reason (*Vernunft*) could not be translated into the language of the understanding (*Verstand*); and thereupon, examining themselves diligently, came to the mortifying conclusion that the former of these organs must have been left out of them. Mr. Lowell, too, abused them for wanting an edition of Emerson in "words of one syllable for infant minds." And he went on to say: "The bother with Mr. Emerson is that though he writes in prose, he is essentially a poet." But surely this is not the whole of the

bother; for after making every allowance for the needs of poetic expression, it still remains true — does it not? — that the poem should have a meaning capable of statement in prose. Emerson would have been the first to acknowledge this, holding, as he did, the somewhat heretical opinion that a translation is about as good as an original. The real bother with Emerson is that his *Weltanschauung* is unfamiliar to most readers and that, being a poet, he nowhere formulates it. His position toward systematic philosophies is almost consciously defined by himself in what he says of Plato: "He has not a system. The dearest defenders and disciples are at fault. He attempted a theory of the universe, and his theory is not complete or self-evident. One man thinks he means this; and another, that; he has said one thing in one place and the reverse of it in another place."

Now, when Emerson "cut the cable that bound us to English thought, and gave us a chance at the dangers and glories of blue water," he had a German pilot on board. If we wish for a formal statement of his philosophy, we must look for it in the systems of Kant, of Fichte, and of Schelling. It may be worth while, even at this late day, to undertake the humble office

of interpreter, for Emerson is increasingly read. Those who cannot understand him affect an admiration, in order to be in the fashion, and one hears the mystic lines of "Brahma" repeated with ecstasy by people who haven't the remotest notion of their meaning.

The three questions which the poet puts to the philosopher are: How do you conceive of nature, of the soul, and of God? The popular conceptions on these points need no long statement; for they are familiar to us from childhood, but they are, in brief, as follows: —

First: External nature — matter — the visible universe, has a real, objective existence independent of spirit. Things are as they seem. We have never doubted it: no man in his *senses* ever doubted it. What do you tell us? Are not the everlasting hills as real as we ourselves? If all the human race and all animals were annihilated, would not the forms of the mineral and vegetable world *be* there all the same, whether there were any onlookers or not?

Secondly: Each human soul is a separate and immaterial thing — separate from God — separate from its body and the world of matter. It is created at the same time with the body which it inhabits, or is at least put into it at some time between conception and birth. Its

relations to the body are mysterious and can be expressed only by a metaphor. The body is its garment, its organ, its tabernacle. It grows with the body, suffers with it, but does not die with it. Matter and spirit are eternally distinct. (This is what the philosophers call "dualism.")

Thirdly: The cause alike of nature and of the soul is God. He is not identical with nature or with the soul, but distinct from them. He is a person, and he has given the soul a destiny higher than nature's. Nature he will or he may uncreate; but to the soul he has promised immortality. He enlightens it through conscience, through nature, and through revelation. It partakes with him of spiritual being; but nature is material and was created for its service. (This is personal theism.)

This is, of course, a crude and mechanical statement of the popular philosophy, but no more so than would be given by nine out of ten intelligent men if asked to formulate their beliefs. These conceptions are held with all degrees of subtlety and of grossness. The minds of thinkers and of refined natures approach to a pure notion of spirit. Children and unthinking persons necessarily materialize their conceptions and help them out with images; the soul is

figured as a thin form of matter, — an *anima*, vapor or breath. God becomes not merely personal but anthropomorphic. In a series of wood-cuts designed by the priests of a Catholic seminary for deaf mutes in Germany, to teach their pupils, through the eye, the mysteries of their religion, the doctrine of the Real Presence is illustrated by a manikin proceeding along a beam of light which streams from God's uplifted palm into the sacramental cup. The same figure is stamped upon the wafer. A similar device represents the mystery of the Immaculate Conception. These deaf mutes were like children. The abstractions which language reaches were to them unknown. Pictures were the only language which their teachers could use, and spirit must be symbolized for them by a visible image. Sir John Davies, in his poem on the "Immortality of the Soul," finds it hard to express the junction of soul and body. He says that the soul does not dwell in the body as in a tent; nor is she as a pilot in his ship, a spider in its web, the print of a seal in the wax, or as heat in fire, but rather as the morning light, that

> "in an instant doth herself unite
> To the transparent air in all and every part," —

a simile, of course, quite as material as the rest.

But with slight modifications the above conceptions form, more or less consciously, the philosophical background of the mass of English poetry from Chaucer to Tennyson. It is true that, here and there, an individual like Shelley may have doubted the personality of God and the immortality of the soul. There are passages in Wordsworth that lean toward pantheism, or at least toward a closer identification of God with nature than in the popular philosophy. Coleridge's prose is filled with the speculations of German metaphysics, but he only stirred the waters of English thought an inch or two below the surface, like a languid wind. Carlyle's protests have done little to remove the national distrust of "mysticism," or to domesticate Novalis and Richter among us. There is no instance of a great English poet so filled with the ideas of a speculative system as Schiller was, for a time, with those of the critical philosophy. The eighteenth century, indeed, offers one distinguished instance of a British idealist who was likewise a poet. But Berkeley's philosophy met a reception at home in striking contrast with the sudden kindling of the German imagination under the sparks thrown off by Kant and his successors. No better illustration of the general attitude toward Berkeley-

ism can be found than Boswell's anecdote of Johnson: "After we came out of the church we stood talking for some time together of Bishop Berkeley's ingenious sophistry, to prove the non-existence of matter and that everything in the universe is merely ideal. I observed that, though we are satisfied his doctrine is not true, it is impossible to refute it. I never shall forget the alacrity with which Johnson answered, striking his foot with mighty force against a large stone till he rebounded from it, 'Sir, I refute it *thus*.'"

This method of refutation is by no means obsolete. One still finds popular writers in our magazines triumphing easily over Berkeley. They tell stories of witty friends who soothe the wretched idealist by reminding him that the mosquitoes which annoy him in the North Woods are merely "phenomena"; or who offer the sophisticated trifler a five-cent cigar, with the assurance that "to him" it is just as good as the finest Regalia, since both, in effect, have no existence. Such passages suggest a painful doubt as to whether the unredeemed Anglo-Saxon intellect is really capable of understanding the most elementary arguments of philosophy.

Emerson's divergence from our customary

point of view will now become plain, if we examine briefly and in the order named his attitude on each of the three cardinal points above mentioned, viz.: The nature of the visible universe, of the human soul, and of God. In his lecture on "The Transcendentalist" (1842) he has himself given his definition of the word. "What is popularly called transcendentalism among us is idealism. . . . The idealism of the present day acquired the name of transcendental from the use of that term by Immanuel Kant, who replied to the sceptical philosophy of Locke, which insisted that there was nothing in the intellect which was not previously in the experience of the senses, by showing that there was a very important class of ideas, or imperative forms, which did not come by experience, but through which experience was acquired; that these were intuitions of the mind itself, and he denominated them *transcendental* forms."

Let us glance then, for a moment, at Kant's philosophy and at the systems that grew out of it. And first it should be said that Kant's criticism is not properly idealism, *i.e.* that it does not deny the objective or independent being of matter. That its conclusions lead inevitably to idealism, is doubtless true. The

question whether Kant had unconsciously taken the step from criticism to idealism is still an open one. Professedly he certainly had not. He spoke of Fichte's egoism as "ghostly" and of Berkeleyism as *Träumerei*.

Kant's doctrine as to matter may be thus expressed. He believed in the reality of the *noumenon*, — the *Ding an sich*, which is the ground of the *phenomenon*, or the thing as it appears to us. We know *that* it is; but we know not *what* it is. For first, in its passage into the mind, it is modified by the senses through which it enters. This is illustrated by the facts of color-blindness, the illusions of the special sense, etc. What by daylight appears to me blue, by lamplight will appear green. In diseased conditions the eye may fail to distinguish between yellow and red. It is possible to conceive that the ear might be so constructed that the combinations which now produce harmony might then produce discord. Nay, it is even possible to conceive that our five senses do not report all that is to be reported of material objects; that we are blind and deaf toward many sides of things; that beings may exist with a hundred senses instead of five. The revelations of the microscope give us a hint of what possibilities lie

in nature beyond the reach of our apprehension. Secondly, space and time, in which all things are perceived, are not in Kant's view qualities inherent in the objects of our perception; nor are they conceptions generalized from experience, like man, color, sound. They are rather *forms* of sense perception, contributed by the mind, subjective elements in the act of perception; not, indeed, earlier in time than our experience, but underived from experience. And thirdly, the *Ding an sich* is still further modified and shaped by the mind, in that the latter imposes upon the raw material of experience certain categories, or *a priori* notions, through which alone experience or cognition becomes possible. Such are the notions of substance and attribute, of cause and effect. These are not derived from experience, they are necessary and universal, and precede experience. Without the aid of these primary notions furnished by the understanding, we could not unite into one the scattered perceptions of a yellow color, a rough surface, a spherical shape, etc., and refer these perceptions to the single object which we call an orange. We have no experience of a substance apart from its qualities. Experience gives us only a manifold of sensations; it is an

intellectual necessity alone, which compels us to refer them to a single substance, or to assume a cause for any given effect. According to Kant's view, the soul looks out upon the material universe through windows of various shapes and hues. The media modify the appearances. Our perceptions are red and square, or blue and round, not because the landscape outside is so, but because the windows are so. Or the soul is a concave mirror distorting what it reflects; or a mould which gives shape to the impressions poured in. There is no accurate copy in the mind of anything outside it. Lambert was right, from Kant's standpoint, when he wrote to the latter that phenomena are not related to noumena, as the exact translation of an unknown speech is related to its original.

Kant's *transcendentalism* has been popularly confounded with idealism in great part, no doubt, because of the emphasis which he laid on the subjective factors of knowledge, but also, mainly because Kant having gone thus far, it was impossible for his followers to avoid going farther. He had shown that the categories of the understanding had no validity outside of the sphere of experience; that we have no right to assume, *e.g.* that God is the

cause of the universe; since God cannot be given as an object in experience. Yet, in violation of this principle, he assumed an underlying *noumenon* or *Ding an sich* as the ground of the phenomenon. What right have you to assume the existence of any *Ding an sich?* asked Fichte. According to your own showing, it can never be an object of experience. We know only phenomena, only our own states of consciousness. *Is* there anything else? Is there any material universe at all? This is that "noble doubt" of which Emerson speaks, the doubt of all idealism. It is impossible to think of an object perceived except in terms of a perceiving subject. Then there *is* no object out of myself. I make the object. "To-morrow, gentlemen," said Fichte, at the close of one of his lectures, "to-morrow we will create God." The thing-in-itself, as Kant had left it, was so forlorn a residuum that it dissolved under Fichte's criticism. In this denial of the absolute existence of matter, Emerson is at one with Fichte and with Berkeley. It is hardly necessary to cite passages in support of this. His idealism is found on his every page. He calls the universe a shade, a dream, "this great apparition." "It is a sufficient account of that appearance we call

the world," he writes in "Nature," "that God will teach a human mind and so makes it the receiver of a certain number of congruent sensations, which we call sun and moon, man and woman, house and trade. In my utter impotence to test the authenticity of the report of my senses, to know whether the impressions they make on me correspond with outlying objects, what difference does it make whether Orion is up there in heaven, or some god paints the image in the firmament of the soul?"

This same mood occurs frequently in Thoreau. The hard world of matter becomes suddenly all fluent and spiritual. The multitude of fixed forms waver off into the *schwankende Gestalten* of the poet's dream. "This earth," exclaims Thoreau, "which is spread out like a map around me, is but the lining of my inmost soul exposed." "In *me* is the sucker that I see;" and of Walden Pond,

> "I am its stony shore
> And the breeze that passes o'er."

Read also in the "Week" the poem entitled "The Inward Morning":—

> "Packed in my mind lie all the clothes
> That outward nature wears."

At this point we may note a distinction between the idealism of Berkeley and of Fichte. Berkeley's system is called by Lewes "theological idealism." He assumed an eternal cause for the images in the mind. This cause was not matter — not Kant's *Ding an sich* — but God, who unfolds the ordered panorama of the universe before the eyes of the soul. With Berkeley nature was a thought of God, with Fichte a thought of the soul. In a later chapter of "Nature" Emerson writes: "Spirit, that is the Supreme Being, does not build up nature around us, but puts it forth through us." Here he takes a position in advance both of Berkeley and of Fichte, and in harmony rather with the objective idealism of Schelling. To see more clearly what this position is, let us go back to Kant. In answering the question, How does Emerson conceive of nature? we have anticipated somewhat the answers to the question, How does he conceive of the soul and of God?

Besides the forms of sense perception — time and space — and the categories of the understanding, Kant found the mind possessed of certain *a priori* notions which have no objects corresponding to them in experience, and which he called the ideas of the pure

reason. One of these is the real, objective existence of the ego — *i.e.* of the immortal soul. In consciousness I am merely the subject; I cannot know myself as independently existing — independently, *i.e.* of my state of consciousness. Yet as the mind is compelled to assume a thing in itself which is the outward basis of knowledge, so it is forced to assume its own existence as the inward basis — the transcendental ground of knowledge. The soul is the fixed point past which the flux of sensations is driven. Knowledge is impossible beyond experience; the speculative reason cannot *prove* this independent life of the soul; but the practical reason, or the will, cannot *act* except upon the assumption. Another of these ideas of the pure reason is God, as the source of the world and of the soul. This idea, in like manner, cannot be verified by experience, but the freedom of the will and the moral law, which is of universal force, compel us to take God for granted.

In Fichte's philosophy the existence and activity of the ego are assumed as the starting-point. God and the universe of matter exist but in the soul. In the act of knowledge the object is identified with (*i.e.* produced by) the subject, and God is nothing else than the

moral order of the world. God, in Fichte's system, is not a being distinct from the universe and the soul. This is the most thoroughgoing of all idealisms. But Emerson is not content with idealism pure and simple. "Idealism," he says, "is a hypothesis to account for nature by other principles than those of carpentry and chemistry. Yet if it only deny the existence of matter, it does not satisfy the demands of the spirit. It leaves God out of me. It leaves me in the splendid labyrinth of my perceptions, to wander without end. Then the heart resists it because it balks the affections in denying substantive being to men and women. Nature is so pervaded with human life that there is something of humanity in all and in every particular. But this theory makes nature foreign to me and does not account for the consanguinity which we acknowledge to it." This last sentence brings us to Schelling.

Schelling, without the intellectual sobriety of Kant or the high and austere moral enthusiasm of Fichte, possessed an imagination which accounts for his influence upon minds of keen instinctive perception like Coleridge's and Emerson's. His system is a poem, and his style has great literary beauty.

Schelling took the step from idealism to pantheism. Let it be granted that the outside universe has no existence independent of the mind. Yet is it not equally certain that the mind has no existence independent of the universe? We are irresistibly driven to assume the reality of matter. Man can no more be a subject without an object, than an object without a subject. The subject becomes conscious of itself only through its recognition of the object. In every act of knowledge the subject and object are identical, *i.e.* the mind knows only its own state of consciousness, and yet it distinguishes itself from its object. How can this identity and diversity at once be reconciled? Only in a higher unity, answered Schelling. Nature and mind are one, and are yet opposed to each other. They are the positive and negative ends of the magnet. They both exist in the absolute, *i.e.* in God, in the All (Τὸ Πᾶν). Reason is the indifference point in the magnet, where subject and object become one. Nature is the dark side of mind. In man, the absolute becomes conscious of himself, makes of himself, as nature, an object to himself as mind. "The souls of men are but the innumerable individual eyes with which the infinite world spirit beholds himself." The

finite soul exists only by the self-limitation of the infinite — exists in the infinite or absolute soul, which is God. Nature, too, which exists in God, strives upward through rock, crystal, plant, animal, toward a more and more complete consciousness of itself, which it finally reaches in man. This aspiration Emerson expresses in the lines prefixed to "Nature": —

> "A subtle chain of countless rings
> The next unto the farthest brings; . . .
> And, striving to be man, the worm
> Mounts through all the spires of form."

Schelling's system is in result mystical, and to be expressed only by figures, however the arguments by which he supported it have the appearance, at least, of severe logical deduction. It is, of course, flat pantheism; and Coleridge, who had followed his earlier speculations, drew back from the later phases which they assumed. Not so Emerson, who is here in harmony with Schelling. There have been denial and assertion as to Emerson's pantheism. His language seems to me capable of but one interpretation. His "Over-Soul" is the same thing as Schelling's *Weltseele*. In his essay under that title, he thus urges the relation of the individual to the infinite spirit: "The soul in man . . . is the background of

our being . . . an immensity not possessed, and that cannot be possessed. From within or from behind, a light shines through us upon things and makes us aware that we are nothing, but the light is all." Again he defines revelation as "an influx of the Divine mind into our mind. It is an ebb of the individual rivulet before the flowing surges of the sea of life." In moods of exaltation, and especially in the presence of nature, this relation of the individual soul to the absolute is discerned. "All mean egotism vanishes. I become a transparent eyeball; I am nothing; I see all; the currents of the Universal Being circulate through me; I am part and particle of God." Compare, too, that remarkable rhapsody in Thoreau's "Week": "Suddenly old Time winked at me — Ah, you know me, you rogue — and news had come that IT was well. That ancient universe is in such capital health, I think undoubtedly it will never die. . . . I see, smell, taste, hear, feel that everlasting Something to which we are allied, at once our maker, our abode, our destiny, our very Selves." A still more important passage is the following from "The Over-Soul": "In all conversation between two persons, tacit reference is made to a third party, to a common nature. That

third party, or common nature is not social; it is impersonal; is God." It is, in other words, the "pure" or universal Ego of Fichte, the absolute of Schelling. "Thought is not my thought," wrote Schelling, "and Being is not my being; for everything belongs to God or the All. There is no such thing as a reason which *we have*, but only a Reason that *has us*." And Emerson again in the essay on "The Transcendentalist"; "His experience inclines him to behold the procession of facts you call the world, as flowing perpetually outward from an invisible, unsounded centre in himself, centre alike of him and of them, and necessitating him to regard all things as having a subjective or relative existence, relative to that aforesaid Unknown Centre of him." And elsewhere: "There is no bar or wall in the soul where man, the effect, ceases, and God, the cause, begins. We lie open on one side to the deeps of spiritual nature, to the attributes of God." "That great nature in which we rest as the earth lies in the soft arms of the atmosphere."

We have now answered the three questions with which we set out, and have found that Emerson's conception of God, the soul, and nature, and their relations to one another, constitute an idealistic pantheism. There is

found an entire harmony in this respect between his earliest and his latest utterances. His essay on "Immortality," published in "Letters and Social Aims," 1876, was greeted in some quarters as a final acceptance of the Christian doctrine of personal immortality. But it is impossible to see how its language can bear such construction. To be sure, Emerson never dogmatizes. He neither asserts nor denies personal immortality, and he even argues hopefully of the soul's destinies. But he comes no nearer a conclusion than this: "I confess that everything connected with our personality fails. Nature never spares the individual. No prosperity is promised to *that*. We have our indemnity only in the success of that to which we belong. *That* is immortal and we only through that. The soul stipulates for no private good." And he takes refuge in a high stoical faith. "I think all sound minds rest on a certain preliminary conviction, namely: That if it be best that conscious personal life shall continue, it will continue; if not best, then it will not; and we, if we saw the whole, should of course see that it was better so."

It is the confidence expressed in this last passage which gives to Emerson's page that serenity and elevation — the confidence, viz.

that the good will ultimately prevail. To doubt it is, he says, "the only scepticism." He would believe with Milton that

> ". . . if this fail,
> The pillared firmament is rottenness
> And earth's base built on stubble."

And when I say that Emerson seems to be a pantheist, I do not mean by pantheism the doctrine that the first principle is matter or force or any unconscious thing. Emerson's whole view is intensely spiritual. His idealism resolves matter into spirit. I will not attempt a definition of personality, or affirm that he attributes personality to God. But if it includes only will and intelligence, I should say that he did, and that his pantheism differs from theism mainly in this, that he declines to separate his idea of God from his manifestation in nature and his presence in the human soul. He would doubtless accept this passage in Matthew Arnold's "Empedocles on Etna" as a fair statement of his position: —

> "All things the world which fill
> Of but one stuff are spun,
> That we who rail are still
> With what we rail at one;
> One with the o'erlabored Power that through the breadth and length

Of earth, and air, and sea,
In men, and plants, and stones,
Hath toil perpetually,
And travails, pants, and moans;
Fain would do all things well, but sometimes fails in strength."

Or if it be objected that this denies the divine omnipotence, then perhaps Wordsworth has given a nearer expression to Emerson's conception in the oft-quoted lines written near Tintern Abbey: —

"And I have felt
A presence that disturbs me with the joy
Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean, and the living air
And the blue sky and in the mind of man;
A motion and a spirit that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things."

Space is wanting, within the limits of this paper, to illustrate fully the direction which Emerson's philosophy has given to his poetry and general literary production. A few of the more obvious effects may be briefly indicated. An ever present sense of the ideality of material things subordinates nature unduly. This thought will visit all high poetic souls, but it must not come to stay. Shakspere does not

forget that this world will one day vanish "like the baseless fabric of a vision," and that we ourselves "are such stuff as dreams are made on"; and Milton speaks of the world's "vain masque." But this is not the mood in which they dwell. The poet belongs to the cheerful world of phenomena. He is most the poet to whom existence is most real — who *realizes* most intensely that experience of the soul which we call nature and human life. In Emerson's "World Soul" occur the following lines : —

> "And what if trade sow cities
> Like shells along the shore,
> And thatch with towns the prairie broad,
> With railways ironed o'er?
> They are but sailing foam-bells
> Along thought's causing stream,
> And take their shape and sun color
> From him that sends the dream."

Is this the attitude of the poet, or of the philosopher? This disturbing influence of idealism will continue in spite of our confidence that the order of phenomena is constant. "God plays no tricks with the soul," says Emerson, recalling Descartes' assertion that external nature must exist because of the truthfulness of God.

As with nature, so with humanity and history. The ethics of transcendentalism postpones all social duties to the needs of the private soul and proposes self-culture as the highest aim. So, in like manner, its literature is unsocial. Emerson's theme is the soul standing over against the universe and discerning in itself God. The varieties of individual fates and passions do not touch him closely. With him the type is important — the common element. "Persons are supplementary to the primary teaching of the soul," he says. "In youth we are mad for persons. But the larger experience of man discovers the identical nature appearing through them all." His religion is aristocratic: "How ill agrees the majestic immortality of our religion with the frivolous populations!" But it is these same populations that swarm the pages of the great creative singers who express the general only through the concrete. In Shakspere and Goethe how infinite the multitude of forms! It is for the poet to distinguish the manifold in unity; for the philosopher to detect the uniform in variety. It is manifest on which of these sides Emerson's sympathies fall. Read his essay on "Plato." "The same — the same: friend and foe are of one stuff; the ploughman, the plough, and the

furrow are of one stuff." And this is the thought in "Brahma": —

> "They reckon ill who leave me out;
> When me they fly, I am the wings;
> I am the doubter and the doubt,
> And I the hymn the Brahmin sings."

There have been poets — Dante for instance — whose poetry has risen on occasion into the region of pure thought, while still keeping close in the main to the shape of this actual life. There have been philosophers who have apprehended truth with such warmth of feeling and imagination, that they have been forced to give poetic expression to a system of high abstractions. To this latter class Emerson belongs. His genius is interpretative rather than constructive. He remains, after all, a preacher —

> "Child of an age that lectures, not creates."

He is one of a class of minds of which the rarest English example is Sir Thomas Browne.

Let it not be supposed that any divorce is here attempted between beauty and truth; nor that, in this classification, no account is made of the exquisite poetic quality in Emerson's thought and style. The substance of his writing is philosophy, but the expression is poetry.

It is not the purpose of this essay to take his measure as a poet, but to point out the direction which his philosophical notions have inevitably given to his poetry and prose.

It would be instructive, but it is unnecessary, to trace the presence of these same notions in the writings of the other New England transcendentalists. Among these Thoreau unquestionably holds the highest place. In one respect he has been more fortunate than Emerson; his subject, New England nature, is more concrete, and will assure him, it is probable, a wider public. The most distinctive note in Thoreau is his inhumanity. "Man," he wrote, "is only the point on which I stand." Almost equally interesting is Margaret Fuller, who indicated more than she performed, and whose personality had more influence than her work.

Among writers who held aloof from the movement, Lowell's earlier poems have much that is transcendental in expression, and none has made more splendid acknowledgment of the impulse which the great lecturer gave his hearers. His tributes recall the fond reminiscences of Wordsworth and Coleridge, touching the days of their joyous youthful radicalism.

> "Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive,
> But to be young was very heaven."

William Ellery Channing, Jr., will also have a permanent place in the history of transcendental poetry, if by nothing else than by virtue of the line, "If my bark sink, 'tis to another sea." Hawthorne was naturally an idealist, but he tells us himself that he came too late to Concord to fall decidedly under Emerson's influence. He would have run little danger of that had he come earlier. The shy independence of his genius took alarm at the too close approach of an alien mind. In his Brook Farm reminiscences he speaks with a certain resentment of Margaret Fuller and her "transcendental heifer."

In conclusion, whatever may have been the ethical and religious effect of the transcendental movement, it certainly helped New England literature. All the young writers within its reach struck their roots deeper into the loosened and freshened soil.

THE MODERN FEELING FOR NATURE

THE MODERN FEELING FOR NATURE

It needs but slight observation to assure any reader of the relatively large share which nature, as distinguished from man, holds in the imaginative literature of to-day. If we open a modern novel, — say one of William Black's, — we cannot fail to notice, on comparing it with "Tom Jones" or "The Vicar of Wakefield," how greatly it is enriched — or shall I say encumbered? — with natural description. We are not suffered at any point in the story to forget that other drama going forward around and above the human actors, — the drama of night and day, sunshine and storm, the panorama of the coast as the yacht cruises past, or of the inland scenery through which the phaeton drives. Mr. Black gives his readers three hundred and sixty-five sunsets to the year; and, at any crisis in the action, what an elaborate scene-shifting! What a pomp of preparation in earth and sky and ocean when the lover is about to declare himself to the maiden! All this "background," as we are used to call it,

was taken for granted by the old novelists. Honest Fielding would have thought the reader a great calf who cared to know what the atmospheric effect on the cliffs happened to be at the moment when the hero kissed the heroine.

But it would be a superficial criticism which should content itself with simply noting this familiar fact. It is not merely true that the poet resorts more constantly to nature than of old, but that his whole attitude toward the natural world is changed. Before going on to rehearse the particulars of this change, I may pause to mention some of its causes. These are many, and not all of them in sight. But two of the most obvious may be given at once. The first of these is the increasing tameness of human life. We live in an ordered community: society is well policed, life and property comparatively safe: etiquette has produced uniformity of manners: if the passions are as strong as ever, which is doubtful, their violent utterance is at least repressed. How seldom our blood is stirred! How remote are the chances of any heroic or romantic adventure befalling the New York or Philadelphia citizen! Those "overt actions" which go forward on Shakspere's stage or in Scott's

romances — those single combats, stabbings, poisonings, ambushes, disguises, conspiracies, intrigues, escapades — are now confined to uncivilized countries, or to the criminal classes of civilized countries. In the latter case they have ceased to be tragic in becoming vulgar. The newspaper reporter may busy himself with the dockets of the police court, but the novelist may not; or, if he does, criticism pronounces him sensational. Does not our nervous propriety shrink from what we call a "scene," — *i.e.* from any physical manifestation of strong feeling, whether it be a sidewalk fight, or a woman fainting in church? It is all well enough for the Prince of Wales to go tiger-hunting in Indian jungles, or even for his sons to outrage public opinion by having themselves tattooed on the equator. But fancy him, like Shakspere's princes, robbing travellers at Gadshill, or pinking Laertes with an envenomed rapier. Imagine a princess of the blood taking to the forest in male attire, or entering the service of a duke in the disguise of a little foot-page. What very bad form it would be voted by a generation which masquerades only at an annual ball! It is much if we manage a serenade without the intervention of a German band, and I feel perfectly certain that no lady

of my acquaintance would take *n* grains of morphine and spend a night in her family vault for the noblest Romeo of them all. War is perhaps the only great theatre for picturesque heroism common to ancient and modern times. But even here the machinery of modern warfare has made personal prowess uncertain. Tennyson may write, —

> "A moment ere the trumpets blow,
> He sees his brood about thy knee:
> The next, like fire, he meets the foe
> And strikes him dead for thine and thee," —

but this is only a *façon de parler*. Practically he doesn't meet the foe. He doesn't even see him individually. He shells him from a mile away, and in a quite impersonal manner. I do not deny that there are other fields for heroism and exciting adventure, some of which are peculiar to modern life. The sea has produced a host of novels. And there are the terrible accidents on railroads and steamers, in theatres, factories, and big hotels, to which all modern men are daily liable. These have scarcely been utilized in literature, and perhaps cannot be, as they have in them the unheroic element of chance. When George Eliot, *e.g.* in "The Mill on the Floss," suddenly drowns her heroine in a freshet, we feel that the device

is inartistic. The story is ended, but not finished. It is true that fate does interpose in this way in actual life, but the artist is master of fate. In his creation we look for a certain roundness which real life denies, — for "the shows of things" to be submitted to "the desires of the mind." Fate, as Alfred de Musset has pointed out, cannot become in modern what it was in ancient literature, — a genuine tragic motive. To us it means either Providence, which is above tragedy, or blind chance, which is below. The essential tragedy of life indeed remains, — love and death, bereavement, sickness, poverty, failure. But it is an inward tragedy, and seeks lyrical rather than dramatic expression. The broad and simple lines of action are wanting which the epic or the tragic poet needs. Motives have grown subtile, character complicated. They are best handled in prose and in detail, — by the novelist who can unfold them slowly and delicately; by Trollope and Henry James, — not by Homer. Wordsworth unconsciously recognized this change of life, necessitating a corresponding change in poetry, when he wrote, in the preface to the "Lyrical Ballads," "One other circumstance distinguishes these poems from the popular poetry of the day: it is this, that

the feeling therein developed gives importance to the action and situation, and not the action and situation to the feeling." Byron and Scott, finding modern English life colorless, fetched their subjects respectively from the Orient and from the Middle Ages. Wordsworth, with a deeper insight into the conditions of modern society, turned from action and passion to sing the inward life of the soul in the presence of outward nature. And so it is that the English poetry of our generation has taken Wordsworth's direction, while Byron and Scott have no longer a following. Their corsairs and Highland chieftains made a prodigious noise in their day, but are now dismissed to the province of melodrama. The spirit of the age is not in them.

The second of the two causes which I have mentioned is the rapid progress of the natural sciences. Every natural fact has a twofold interest: it is knowledge, and it is poetry. The poet, to be sure, approaches nature in a different mood from the scientific inquirer. He has to do primarily with beauty rather than with truth. It is, in a sense, indifferent to him whether the sun moves around the earth or the earth around the sun, and poetry has always been slow to avail itself of the

discoveries of science. A century after Copernicus, Milton still employed the Ptolemaic conceptions in "Paradise Lost." Yet the poet, too, partakes in this aroused attention. Goethe, in his doctrine of colors and his inquiries into the foliation of the skull, became himself an investigator. It is impossible that the wonderful generalizations of modern science should fail to stimulate the imagination. Books like Humboldt's "Cosmos," Gilbert White's "Natural History of Selborne," Kane's "Polar Voyages," and Marsh's "The Earth as Modified by Human Action," are books for poets. Have we not volumes written on "The Poetry of Science"?—"the fairy-tales of science," Tennyson calls them. He prophesies of its achievements in "Locksley Hall," and in "The Sleeping Beauty" he wishes to sleep a hundred years to wake on science grown to more. The critics find in Walt Whitman a modern feeling which they call "cosmic emotion." The theory of evolution offers fresh relations to the poet. Huxley, *e.g.* makes the startling suggestion of a kindred between the young girl and the flower that she holds in her hand.

Considering, then, the closeness of scrutiny which physical science has made a habit of

the modern mind, we are prepared to find that the English poetry of the nineteenth century embraces a greater range of natural phenomena than that of any previous century, — perhaps of all previous centuries taken together. In one of Wordsworth's earliest poems — "An Evening Walk," published in 1793 — occurs this couplet, —

> "And, fronting the bright west, yon oak entwines
> Its darkening boughs and leaves in stronger lines."

This image of a tree standing black against the sunset is familiar enough to the reader of to-day; but Wordsworth makes the following note upon the passage: "I recollect distinctly the very spot where this first struck me. The moment was important in my poetical history; for I date from it my consciousness of the infinite variety of natural appearances which had been unnoticed by the poets of any age or country, and I made a resolution to supply in some degree the deficiency." Elsewhere Wordsworth wrote, "Excepting a passage or two in the 'Windsor Forest' of Pope, and some delightful pictures in the poems of Lady Winchelsea, the poetry of the period intervening between the publication of the 'Paradise Lost' and 'The Seasons' does not contain a single

new image of external nature." How many new images of external nature Wordsworth himself added to the stock of English descriptive poetry would be matter of tedious enumeration. I will stop to mention one, as an example of how he wrote with his eye on the object, instead of repeating the traditions of books, as the eighteenth-century poets had done: —

> "At evening, when the earliest stars began
> To move along the edges of the hills."

Other poets had spoken of the stars rising or setting; but none, so far as I know, had noticed this appearance, peculiar to a mountainous country in a high latitude. In our mediæval poetry, such as the metrical romances of chivalry and the legends of saints, where the descriptions of dress, armor, upholstery, etc., are tediously minute, very few aspects of the world of nature are mentioned at all, and those few are repeated until they become mere conventional ornaments of the verse. There must have been observers and lovers of nature in those times as in these, were it only Chaucer's

> "little herdegroomes
> That kepen bestes in the broomes."

Yes, I feel sure that all through the Dark Ages — all through that dreary mess of feudal systems, monkeries, and crusades — the boys at least were naturalists. They *must* have gone berrying and birds'-nesting; they played truant to the woods and ponds; the soles of their bare feet were in nervous communication with mother earth; the wild relish of sassafras and wintergreen — or whatever in the flora of the Old World corresponds to those woodland delicacies — gave a thrill to their palates beyond all the power of the pastry-cook to impart. How refreshing is the thought of Nature's permanence, and of the perennial instinct which draws us to her! It lets in a little sunbeam on the darkness of those remote, unimaginable centuries.

Yet, except in a few passages of Chaucer and still fewer of other poets, this feeling had no record. Literature does not take up into itself all the life of its time, but only its prominent ideas; and these for the Middle Ages were chivalry and the Church. Professor George P. Marsh, in a note on a line of Chaucer, says that "objects which were not sources of danger or of profit, which neither helped nor hindered material interests, did not in general excite interest enough to stimulate to the closeness of

observation which is necessary to bring out the latent poetry that lies hid under nature's rudest surfaces. . . . It is difficult to suppose such changes in physical law as the non-appearance of the aurora borealis, during the many centuries which have left no record of this striking phenomenon, would imply; but when we remember that the poetry of Greece and Rome contains only the fewest, faintest, and most questionable allusions to the phosphoric sparkling of the sea, we may well believe that those who had a hundred times witnessed the coruscations of the northern lights thought it a meteor too unrelated to the life of man to be worthy of poetic celebration."

In our early poets the bigger movements and showier objects alone arrested attention, — what we may call the commonplaces of nature, such as the succession of the seasons and of day and night, the apparent revolution of the heavens, the flow of streams, the vernal green of meadows and woods, the colors of the brightest flowers. This gives a certain breadth to their landscapes which is missing from the minuter delineations of the moderns. The latter have taught themselves to look narrowly and bring into use neglected effects, — the grays and browns of autumnal fields, the yellow of with-

ered grasses, the faint hints of color vouchsafed by wintry skies, the pale-green strip along the west after sunset. This more delicate analysis is common to most of the English poets of the nineteenth century, but it has a special character in each. Shelley's imagination, *e.g.*, dwells among the subtlest and most evanescent phenomena of nature, — the tricks which light plays with the more fluid elements, water and air, the aspects of stars, clouds, showers, dew, rainbows, mist, and frost, the winds, the foam of the sea, the phases of the moon, the green shadows of waves, the shape of flames, the golden lightning of the setting sun, — whatever was least bodily and substantial. In the poetry of Keats, on the other hand, there is a warm smell of the earth. His pages are rich with the things which the sun cherishes, — with grass and leaves, mosses, rushes, mushrooms, fruits and flowers, grasshoppers and crickets, bees and honey, flocks in fat pastures, milk and wine. Wordsworth's specialty was for mountains. Of this subject he conceived himself to have a monopoly, and heard with impatience any mention of it by another. Byron's feeling for nature was less intimate, saving and excepting his passion for the sea. His best passages on this national theme are most truly lyrical : they have in them the lift and

vital movement of the waves, the wide horizon of the ocean, and the cadence of its voice in storm.

A second distinction in the attitude of the modern mind toward nature is this, — viz. that it prefers what is characteristic to what is merely beautiful. Or rather let me say that our idea of beauty has changed — profoundly changed. Chaucer and his contemporaries approached nature in a childlike spirit. A child experiences an almost purely physical pleasure from the play of the outward world upon his senses. A bright color, a musical sound, a sweet taste, a fragrant smell, the warm feel of the sunshine, move him to involuntary joyous utterance. So with these infants of the English muse: the coming of the spring, the voices of birds, the many-colored flowers in the meadow, the freshness of the morning, set them to singing. They have only a few notes, but those spontaneous. To an age which talks about "objective and subjective" and "the moral interpretation of nature" there is a certain winsomeness in this simplicity of feeling, but we cannot recover their position. In the poetry of the Elizabethan and Commonwealth periods there is a greater range and complexity than in Chaucer. Shakspere touched the stops of nearly all feelings and thoughts known to

humanity. Yet his business as a dramatist was primarily with man and not with nature. Here and there in other writers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries a passage may be found which seems to embody something of the modern spirit, — a description, perhaps, in Drayton's "Polyolbion," a song of Beaumont's, some lines of Milton or Andrew Marvell. In Milton's "L'Allegro" and "Il Penseroso" the selection of natural circumstances is such as to give all outdoors an expression in sympathy with the contrasted moods. But that pair of counterparts is, in this respect, unique in the literature of its time, and anticipates the progress of English poetry in certain directions by at least a century. It remains true, in general, that the only landscape quality which gave pleasure to the artistic sense of the Elizabethan poets was smiling loveliness, — the loveliness of bright sunshine, purling brooks, crystal founts, shady groves, green meads, blossoms, warbling birds, and the other stock properties of pastoral song. The harsh and dreary aspects of nature made no appeal to them. A landscape with a low tone of color or pitched in a minor key, a roadside at dusk, a desolate fen, a range of sand-hills pounded by the surf, awoke no answering emotion. The mountains, the sea, the winter, and the night were to

them ugly and terrible, — the waste places of nature, fruitless and unfriendly to man. But what the modern poet or artist values in a landscape is character, individuality, expression, — what we call local flavor. And in reproducing it in words or on canvas, he strives above all for sincerity. He wishes to be true to the leading impression. "Crossing a bare common," writes Emerson, "in snow puddles, at twilight, under a clouded sky, without having in my thoughts any occurrence of special good fortune, I have enjoyed a perfect exhilaration." "My sister Emily loved the moors," said Charlotte Brontë. If we wish to know how intense a passion can be inspired by a country of barren hills covered with heather, furze, rocks, and pools of bog water ruffled by a bitter wind, we have but to read the powerful and savage story of "Wuthering Heights." The heroine dreamed that she was dead, but in heaven she was homesick for the Yorkshire moors, and broke her heart with weeping till the angels flung her out into the middle of the heath on the top of Wuthering Heights, where she awoke, sobbing for joy. Above all the moment must conspire, and the mood of the observer. The heart, a victim of unconscious associations, remembers some little scene beyond the Alps or Niagara.

We are reminded, as we read, that it is not the most beautiful landscapes or the most beautiful women that have aroused the highest passions, but those about whose beauty, such as it was, there has been something markedly individual. "There is no excellent beauty," says Bacon, "that hath not some strangeness in the proportion." The change to which I have alluded in the poetic ideal of beauty applies indeed not only to nature, but to the human face, in which we more and more tend to subordinate shape and color to the subtler graces of expression. From its lack of this quality of expressiveness, the amiable insipidity of the scenery in such poems as Spenser's "Faërie Queene," Fletcher's "Faithful Shepherdess," and Browne's "Britannia's Pastorals," makes a shallow impression on the modern reader. Milton's paradise, with its "vernal delight," its "blossoms and fruits at once of golden hue," its "gay enamelled colors," and its "gentle gales fanning their odoriferous wings," is hardly to the modern taste. It wants reality, homeliness, relief. A nature made up of splendid generalities, but without any special characteristic of its own, has no sentiment about it, and can please only the senses, or, at best, the fancy. I may quote, in this connection, a saying of

Thomas Hardy in his novel "The Return of the Native": —

"It is a question if the exclusive reign of this orthodox beauty is not approaching its last quarter. The new vale of Tempe may be a gaunt waste in Thule; human souls may find themselves in closer and closer harmony with external things wearing a sombreness distasteful to our race when it was young. . . . The time seems near, if it has not actually arrived, when the mournful sublimity of a moor, a sea, or a mountain will be all of nature that is absolutely consonant with the moods of the more thinking among mankind. And ultimately to the commonest tourist spots like Iceland may become what the vineyards and myrtle gardens of South Europe are to him now, and Heidelberg and Baden be passed unheeded as he hastens from the Alps to the sand-dunes of Scheveningen."

Without going so far as this, or prophesying that because the poet has added new strings to his harp he must therefore cut out the old, I may notice the commentary on this passage afforded by its author's delineation of Egdon Heath, in the same novel, which seems to me one of the most original things in fiction. This dark little plot of earth — the scene of the

story — gradually becomes alive and attains a fateful personality: it has a will and thoughts of its own; it comes in, like the Greek chorus, to interpret between the audience and the *dramatis personæ*. Nay, finally, Egdon Heath grows to be itself the chief figure and hero of the tale more truly than any of the human characters. The author has even resorted to the extraordinary device of inserting a map of Egdon by way of frontispiece, and it is strange with what a continued fascination we are drawn to turn back and consult it while reading the book. The only passage that I can think of, in contemporary literature, analogous to this of Egdon Heath are the wonderful chapters in "The Toilers of the Sea" which describe the duel between the ocean and the man. The power to animate unconscious matter with a purpose, and to put it in conflict with a human will, is characteristic of Hugo's genius. Instance the episode in "Ninety-Three" of the cannon which gets loose in the gun-room of the ship, and which, though blindly obeying the laws of gravitation, is made to behave with the malicious cunning of a wild beast. This personification of natural forces and objects has little likeness to that merely rhetorical form of personification which

is so constant a feature in the Elizabethan writers, reaching its acme, perhaps, in Sidney's "Arcadia." The latter is, at best, the product of a rapid fancy; the former of a deep and brooding imagination allied, in its dealings with nature, to the myth-making instinct of the early world. All that it needs to *be* mythology is that final belief in its own creations which is now, of course, no longer possible.

Connected with this part of our subject is the observation that a feeling of the sublime in nature is, in English poetry at least, a very late growth. Instances of its occurrence might, it is true, be furnished from every century of our literature, but the full expression of it as of a predominant mood begins only with the so-called Romantic school of the eighteenth century, — Gray, Collins, Akenside, Beattie, Dyer, and their contemporaries. Addison, in his epistle in verse written from Italy and addressed to Montague, speaks of his passage of the Alps as a disagreeable and even frightful episode of his journey. Somewhat earlier Dryden had written, addressing Calvinism, —

> "What though thy native kennel be but small,
> Bounded betwixt a puddle and a wall," —

the puddle being the Lake of Geneva, and the wall the Swiss Alps. In the "History of the Reign of Queen Anne," by the late John Hill Burton, in the course of some remarks on the English landscape gardening of that period, the historian gives an extract from the letter of one Captain Burt, superintendent of certain road-making operations in the Scotch Highlands, by way of showing how very modern a person Carlyle's "picturesque tourist" is. The captain spoke of the romantic scenery of the glens as "horrid prospects." It was considerably later in the century that Dr. Johnson said, in answer to Boswell's timid suggestion that Scotland had a great many noble wild prospects, "I believe, sir, you have a great many. Norway, too, has noble wild prospects, and Lapland is remarkable for prodigious noble wild prospects. But, sir, let me tell you, the noblest prospect which a Scotchman ever sees is the highroad that leads him to England."

One reason for the change of taste in these respects is the greater security and comfort of modern life. As our houses are better protected against the cold, winter is robbed of its terrors, and we may observe its beauty and sublimity at our leisure. Such a poem as Whittier's "Snow-Bound," or such an essay as

Lowell's "A Good Word for Winter," would hardly have been written a century ago.[1] In like manner, as our streets and homes are better lighted, night is no longer what it was when the baron banqueted by the light of smoky torches, or even when the London link-boys lighted home the sedan-chair of Belinda or Clarissa returning from an ombre party. The sea has been in part disarmed by the invention of steam and the improvements in the construction of vessels. Formerly a range of high mountains was nothing but an interruption to travel, a hideous and perilous barrier to be surmounted and left behind as soon as possible. Now there are good roads through the Highlands and tunnels under the Alps. It is noteworthy what a difference this single matter of improved roads has made in modern ways of regarding nature. In the greetings of our early poets to the spring, one of the circumstances of that joyful season most frequently dwelt upon is the drying of the wet, impassable roads. Thus, in the

[1] In Thomson's "Winter," written in 1726, the thought still uppermost is that of deadness and destruction. It is in Cowper's "Task," published in 1785, that we first encounter the expression of that joy which the hardy Northern races feel in the sublime and beautiful aspects of their peculiar season.

romance of "King Alexander," written in the fourteenth century, —

> "Wayes faireth, the clayes cling;"

and again, —

> "The sunne ariseth and falleth the dewing;
> The nesche clay hit maketh clyng."

Shakspere, in one of his songs, characterizes winter as the season —

> "When blood is nipt, and ways be foul."

And Milton, in his sonnet to Lawrence, asks, —

> "Now that the fields are dank and ways are mire,
> When shall we sometimes meet and by the fire
> Help waste the sullen day?"

Another reason for the absence of this feeling for the sublime in nature in our earlier poetry is perhaps to be found in the fact that in the southern and midland counties of England, which contributed most largely to the national literature, there was an absence of romantic scenery. Principal Shairp, in his little volume on the "Poetic Interpretation of Nature," calls to mind the scanty mention of mountains in Shakspere. It was perhaps for this reason that Macpherson's "Ossian" so took the English public by storm about the middle of the eighteenth century, filling the mind with images

of vague sublimity and desolation; columns of watery mist on the hills, ghosts of Fingal and the Celtic heroes looming dim in the setting moon, ruined courts of chieftains, the thistle shaking by the broken wall, the grass feebly whistling on the windy heath, the cliffs of sea-surrounded Gormal, and the rock by the blue stream of Lutha. It was to this spirit that Collins appealed in his "Ode on the Superstitions of the Scottish Highlands." Had there been a cataract like Niagara in the Severn or the Thames, the emotion of the sublime would perhaps have been earlier developed. Toward the close of the century we find the modern feeling very distinctly in Burns. He wrote little poetry directly descriptive of natural scenery, — which is, after all, but a low order of poetry, — but he let us see the landscapes of the North in vivid flashes, as it were between the lines. His favorite month was November: its wild sky, its bare fields, the leafless woods straining in the wind, were in consonance with his mood, — they did "express his fortune." Night and storm moved him to ecstasy, — seasons of tempest and flood, when the "burn came down an acre braid." He loved the "loud, solitary whistle of the curlew in a summer noon, or the wild, mixing cadence of a troop of

gray plover in an autumnal morning." His national anthem, "Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled," "was composed," says Carlyle, "on horseback, in riding in the middle of tempests over the wildest Galloway moor;" and he adds that "to the external ear it should be sung with the throat of the whirlwind." In another poet who wrote at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century, the modern attitude is also decidedly present, especially in the extension of his sympathy to the ragged and shabby phases of rural scenery and life. This was George Crabbe, whom Byron called "nature's sternest painter and her best." Crabbe could paint a village common, a salt-marsh, a sandy sheepwalk, or a gypsy camp, with naked fidelity. He was in some respects the forerunner of Wordsworth; but he wanted the latter's high imagination, —

> "The light that never was on sea or land,
> The consecration and the poet's dream."

In speaking of the appreciation of the characteristic and the sublime in nature as marks of modern poetry, I have anticipated in some degree a third distinction, — namely, its love for wild nature: nature unmodified by human action. In Chaucer and Spenser — nay, even

in Thomson, and quite down to the middle or end of the eighteenth century — how cultivated and artificial the landscape! It is always a gentleman's park, trim gardens, lawns, orchards, sheep-downs, forest preserves, and fields divided by lanes and hedges. The change of taste came in with the movement that is known in literary history as Romanticism. This movement, like all mental epidemics, was common to the countries of Western Europe, and the literatures of England, Germany, and France exercised on each other a reciprocal influence. Rousseau was a leader in this return to nature, and, later, Chateaubriand, who has been called the inventor of the primitive forest. Byron was following in the track of this movement when he wrote, —

> "There is a pleasure in the pathless wood,
> There is a rapture on the lonely shore,
> There is society where none intrude,
> By the deep sea, and music in its roar.
> I love not man the less, but nature more."

It must be confessed that there was something theatrical and self-conscious in the attitude of the Romanticists toward nature. They went to her because they fancied that she sympathized with them, not because they sympathized with her. They visited her for purposes of soliloquy

and declamation, and to find in her savage solitudes an echo of the gloomy passions in their own breasts. In this passage of Byron's, *e.g.*, there is a taint of that insincerity which vitiated much of his serious poetry. Byron was never a close and loving observer of nature for her own sake. It was precisely because he loved man the less that he occasionally loved nature more. In Wordsworth, who really knew nature and lived close to her, the mood is more genuine and at the same time more human. His theme was the life of man in nature, and the elevating and soothing influence of nature on man.

It is worthy of note that the rise of the Romantic school was accompanied by a change of taste in landscape gardening. Some of the poets — notably Shenstone — were landscape gardeners themselves, and laid out their grounds in imitation of natural scenery. This new style was called on the Continent "the English." Most of the large cities of Germany have public pleasances named *Der Englische Garten;* and the philosopher Schopenhauer thus defines the difference between the new and the old or French style: "The great distinction between the English and the old French gardens rests, in the last analysis, upon this, —

viz., that the former are laid out in the objective, the latter in the subjective sense. That is to say, in the former the will of nature as it manifests [*objektivirt*] itself in tree, mountain, and water is brought to the purest possible expression of its ideas, — that is, of its own being. In the French gardens, on the other hand, there is reflected only the will of the owner, who has subdued nature so that instead of her own ideas she wears, as tokens of her slavery, the forms which he has forced upon her, — clipped hedges, trees cut into all manner of shapes, straight alleys, arched walks, etc."

It is the same passion for the independent, objective life of nature, for nature in her aloofness and remoteness from human society, which especially distinguishes the poetry of the last fifty years. It is this, for instance, which differences Thoreau from Wordsworth. The feeling has perhaps not gained in intensity since the early days of Romanticism, but has gained in genuineness. It has been modified, too, by the scientific habit of mind in these latter generations. For literary purposes nature was formerly regarded as merely auxiliary to man. The notes of birds, the colors and the perfumes of flowers, were meant to minister to his delight. "Man is one world, and hath

another to attend him," wrote Herbert. This may be one cause, or perhaps the final cause, of the beauty in nature; but science has revealed of late that it has another meaning: it serves the economies of nature herself. It has long been known that the songs of birds are designed to attract their mates. And the investigations of Darwin and others in plant structure have shown that the colors and perfumes of flowers, and their infinite variety of quaint or graceful shapes, are intended to secure their cross-fertilization by means of insects. The wonderful nicety and complexity of these adaptations cannot but convince the most thoughtless that the plant exists for itself as well as for us, — that it has a life, and almost a personality, of its own. The thought now uppermost in our poetry is therefore the indifference of nature to man, rather than her subserviency to his uses. But this thought, so far from repelling, attracts. Having tamed the outskirts of nature which lie next us, we now seek her out in her fastnesses, study her shy ways, and watch the play of her uncontrolled forces. It is the wild that we are after, — that which cannot be predicted or forestalled, which has a will of its own, which man has not handled and spoiled. It is in search of this that we go to the Maine

woods and the Yellowstone, that we climb the Weisshorn and visit the glaciers of Norway. It is strange how completely the impressions made on the mind by a cultivated and an uncultivated landscape have been reversed. To our ancestors the rocks, the swamps, the wilderness, were melancholy and horrible. They did not go to look for a mountain. They hadn't lost any mountain. But to the modern man in the Adirondacks, the roar of the rapids, the gaunt dead trees around the lake, the wet carry, the big rotten trunks that impede his steps, even the punkies that defy his smudge, are sources of joy and refreshment unspeakable. He sees in them the unconsciousness, the spontaneity, the coarse health of the great mother from whom we all are sprung, to whom we all return, but whose existence we have forgotten in the cities. It is life that he drinks, — life from exhaustless fountains, — enough for the whole world. He begins to understand that men have but scratched the surface of this globe a little here and there. Yet we need not go so far afield for our wilderness. Nature is at work in the next wood lot. Even in the village street, what a look of wildness is given by a pine in the dooryard! The pine is *ferae naturae* and cannot be tamed. The wind and the

night dwell in its branches. The pine is an Indian.

In the virgin and primeval woods, however thick the ground is piled with the ruins of ancient trees, there is no sense of age, but rather a feeling of youth perpetually renewed. The presence of man and his works is necessary to give an air of antiquity to nature. To an American especially, the landscapes of Europe are invested with the pathos of human fates. So many generations have tilled those fields. All is so old, — so old. The ground is like the sod of the churchyard. Let the traveller, on some August afternoon, go on foot through some remnant of that dark Hyrcynian wood from which our Gothic ancestors issued to the conquest of Rome, — through the Black Forest, or the Odenwald, or the Harz, *e.g.* For miles he walks along a smooth government road between the columnar trunks and under the sombre needles of the firs. He hears no bird; he sees no snake, no insect. The tangled underbrush is absent which gives an air of exuberant life to our "second growth" in America; he misses the light green of the birches, the shining kalmia thickets, the scrub-oaks, the green brier, and Solomon-seal, and shinleaf, — the whole multitude of lusty, cheerful little

shrubs and herbs that swarm the interspaces of the woods at home. All about him is still and dark and cool. It is a solitude, but it is a planted solitude. The trees have been set and trimmed by the foresters. They are individually younger than the trees in the American wilderness; but the forest, as a whole, makes the impression of age. Perhaps an old woman comes slowly down the mountain, walking in the dry bed of a stream, and painfully dragging across her shoulder a bundle of wood that trails behind her on the ground. At evening the traveller comes out on a height above some watch-making or toy-carving little *dorf*, whose red roofs cluster in the narrow valley at his feet. A swift stream runs through the valley, down which is miraculously poled a long jointed timber raft, filling the brook from bank to bank. The rubble-walled, cross-timbered peasants' houses stand in the strips of meadow which edge the stream. The angelus begins to ring from the Byzantish cupola of the old church halfway down the hill. The sun has sunk into dark red mists above the horizon. Tired peasants go by in the lessening light with the salutation "*Grüss Gott.*" All is inexpressibly melancholy, inexpressibly old. "The still, sad music of humanity" comes up from every foot

of meadow and forest. At such an hour, and in such a spot, were written those words of Goethe which best interpret the spirit of the scene: "*Ueber allen Gipfeln ist Ruh*," — "Over all the hills is rest. In all the tree-tops hearest thou hardly a breath. The birds are silent in the wood. Wait only, soon thou too shalt rest."

But this exaltation in the presence of wild nature has yet a deeper source. It may be traced to that mysticism which is a constant note in the poetry of our time. Mysticism is defined by Schopenhauer as the soul's recognition of its identity with nature. Says Thoreau, —

> "It is no dream of mine
> To ornament a line.
> I cannot come nearer to God and heaven
> Than I live to Walden even.
> *I* am its stony shore
> And the breeze that passes o'er."

There is seldom, perhaps, a full and clear recognition of this identity; but the poet feels in the unconscious operations of nature something akin to instinct in the animals and in himself. The migrations of birds, the cells of the bee, the spider's web, the beaver's dam, are analogous to the human mother's love for her child. An instinct is the will of the race

working blindly in the individual, and, independent of his purposes, securing its own ends even at the sacrifice of the individual life. We reverence it as something greater than ourselves. It comes from that mysterious depth which lies behind and below our private existences. There is here a singular contradiction which arises from the twofold character of our relation to nature. On the one hand we exult at the triumphs of the human mind over inanimate matter. We hail each advance of science which enables man to curb and guide the wild universe and make it do his will. And yet we have a secret joy in the thought that this control can never be complete. Things will still be arranged for us by a power greater than our own, and we are proud to throw the responsibility on it. We cannot determine beforehand the characters of our own children; we cannot by any scheme of education reproduce the miracle of genius; we cannot by our chemistry create a single germ of plant or animal life. If we could, — if our control over the universe were complete, if there were no element of the unexpected and the mysterious in our lives, — what a cut-and-dried thing the world would be! Hence our gladness in the freedom of wild nature.

Let us look closer at this twofold and contradictory relation. Man is a part of nature, and yet he is an alien in nature. He is, in one view, but a higher wave of the sea which has come to consciousness, overtops and surveys its fellows for an instant, separates itself in thought from all which it beholds, and then sinks back into the plane of unconscious life. But, in another view, man only *is*, and nature exists but as a dream or experience of his soul.

> "We receive but what we give,
> And in our life alone does nature live."

Considered from this point of view, how great a share of man's life is immaterial, — lies out of nature! What *does* man in the world? How few his actions are compared with his thoughts! If one should keep a diary of his actual bodily deeds, and it should be read to him at the end of the year, he would not recognize it as a sufficient record of his year's life. And what have our political and ecclesiastical boundaries to do with the landscape? The country is covered with a net-work of invisible relations, — the State of Massachusetts, the County of Middlesex, the Third Judicial District, the Diocese of Western New York. Nature knows no such geography. Our maps

are records of a life foreign to hers. "As for me," says Thoreau, taking nature's own standpoint, "Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are now only the subtlest imaginable essences, which would not stain the morning sky." No, you will not find them in the morning sky; nor will you find love, duty, and virtue in the morning sky, though you may find incitements to them there. For it is in this relation that Matthew Arnold's saying is true, —

"Man must begin where nature ends."

In nature is no conscience: neither morality nor immorality.

"Then when the clouds are off the soul,
When thou dost bask in Nature's eye,
Ask how *she* viewed thy self-control,
Thy struggling, tasked morality. . . .
'Ah, child!' she cries, 'that strife divine,
Whence was it? for it is not mine.'"

Very similar is the thought in Emerson's "Sphinx." Nature, surveying her million creatures, finds each of them, except man, at one with itself. In man alone there is no inward harmony, because in him alone are aspirations which nature cannot satisfy. Nature asks, —

"Who has drugged my boy's cup?
Who has mixed my boy's bread?

> Who with sadness and madness
> Has turned the man-child's head?"

To which the poet answers, —

> "The fiend that man harries
> Is love of the best; . . .
> The Lethe of nature can't drug him again
> Whose soul sees the perfect
> That his eyes seek in vain."

In Shakspere's later comedies occurs now and then a passage of such stress and depth that it opens a chasm in the floor of the mimic stage. It is but a few lines, perhaps, and hardly interrupts the action: the players leave it out in their stage-versions: a narrow fissure, — the comic dialogue straddles merrily across it and away, — but the reader pauses and looks down, and sees that it "visits the bottom of the monstrous world." Such a passage is that in "The Winter's Tale," where Perdita, objecting to "carnations and streaked gillyvors," because she has heard it said, —

> "There is an art which in their piedness shares
> With great creating nature," —

is thus answered by Polixenes: —

> "Say there be:
> Yet nature is made better by no mean,
> But nature makes that mean: so, over that art
> Which you say adds to nature, is an art

> That nature makes. . . .
> This is an art
> Which does mend nature, — change it, rather; but
> The art itself is nature."

In other words, everything is natural; for man, with his arts, is but a part of nature. The converse of this is the sentence of Sir Thomas Browne: "All things are artificial, for nature is the art of God." These two sayings complement each other, and contain the whole double truth of the matter.

But, whatever be our philosophy, — materialism, idealism, or dualism, — the relations of man to nature are affecting and profound. Any *rapprochement* between the two gives a fine artistic pleasure. Thus, the delight that we take in copying natural forms in our arts of design finds a curious counterpart in the pleasant shock we experience when we discover in nature apparent imitations of human work, — not merely in the grotesque resemblances assumed by certain trees and rocks, but when, as is sometimes the case, nature herself turns landscape gardener. In the Adirondacks one comes upon beaver meadows which surprise by a kind of park-like civility. There stood for centuries a pond formed by the beavers' dam. The dam has long since disappeared, for its shy architect

is the first of the wild creatures to take flight on the approach of man. But its place is occupied by a smooth lawn in whose spongy mosses the white-fringed orchids grow thickly as in parterres. Its borders are skirted by graceful masses of the American larch, projecting and retiring in little capes and recesses as if planted by the hand of art. This tree itself has a civilized look, with its delicate drooping foliage. The whole effect of one of these beaver meadows is strikingly elegant and cultivated. What a domestic air, too, is suddenly given to the Maine woods by Thoreau's imagination of the fall of a tree in the middle of the night "as though a door had shut somewhere in the damp and shaggy wilderness"! So in spots once humanized, where nature is recovering her rule, there is a pensive charm, — as in abandoned gardens and orchards with fruit trees run wild and half-effaced terraces.

Matthew Arnold has affirmed the true function of modern poetry to be the moral interpretation of nature. The interpretation of nature! Does nature, then, mean anything? Does she *say* anything? Does she, who is unmoral, speak to man's conscience and *moral* instinct? We know what power of teaching Wordsworth at-

tributed to an "impulse from a vernal wood"; and that Bryant wrote, —

> "To him who in the love of nature holds
> Communion with her visible forms, she speaks
> A various language."

To Bryant she spoke of the universality, the naturalness and the dignity of death. If we turn to Arnold's own poetry, we may find examples of similar interpretations: —

> "One lesson, Nature, let me learn of thee; . . .
> Of work unsevered from tranquillity."

These are old commonplaces, though it is the privilege of the poet to make them ever fresh. But I take it that, by moral interpretation, the critic meant not merely the drawing of isolated examples like these. For the method of poetry is not didactic. He meant rather the indirect refreshment and elevation of man's moral nature which accompanies the perception of new and beautiful suggestions from the outward world, and especially the perception of that spiritual background to nature which is kindred with the spirit of man. For, after all, it is something ulterior to nature that modern poetry seeks in nature. "The other world," said Thoreau, "is all my art. My pencils will draw no other: my jack-knife will cut nothing else."

ÆSTHETIC BOTANY

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CONSIDERING the endless variety of the earth's flora, it is strange that so few blossoms have been domesticated in poetry and art. The rose alone usurps probably ninety-nine hundredths of all mention of flowers in literature. It would seem that the human race has singled out this genus from the vegetable world to be its pet ornament and insignia. The poet has chosen the rose with its thorn as the type of human beauty, passion, fragility, and pain. He wets it with wine and with tears; wreathes it in his mistress's hair and lays it on her coffin. It is needless to point out that the flower thus humanized, with its spicy breath, its silken petals, its "hue angry and brave," is a product of the gardener's art. There are many blossoms in the American flora handsomer than the wild rose, and some equally fragrant.

A number of plants have become familiar in current allusion through mythology, history, and heraldry, being identified with the fortunes

of a nation or a dynasty, or associated with some deathless legend. Such are the sacred lotus of the Nile; the narcissus of the Greeks; the hyacinth (Milton's "sanguine flower inscribed with woe"); the Lily of the Annunciation; the fleur-de-lis; the broom-plant of the Plantagenets; the Irish shamrock; the Scottish thistle; and the *edelweiss* of the Alps.

Others are known by report as in themselves singular or beautiful, as the century plant, the night-blooming cereus, the flower of the Holy Spirit, the snow flower of the Sierras, and the *Victoria regia*, which covers the waters of the Amazon with miles of floating leaf and blossom. Others again have derived a meaning from ancient or modern custom, as the bay, willow, cypress, myrtle, and olive.

After the rose, the flowers of commonest occurrence in the English poets are perhaps the following: the daisy (Shelley's "constellated flower that never dies"); the

> "the pansy freaked with jet,
> The glowing violet";

the "rathe" primrose (Shakspere's "flower that's like thy face, pale primrose"); the pink; the daffodil; the "azured" harebell; the hawthorn; the "virgin" lily, which in the

English poets means the lily-of-the-valley (*Convallaria majalis*); the jessamine; and the "lush" woodbine or sweet honeysuckle. (Shakspere's woodbine, however, is, perhaps, the blue bindweed or great convolvulus.) None of these are natives of America except the harebell (*Campanula rotundifolia*). Our violets and daisies differ from the English species. The rest are familiar as cultivated plants.

However dear these flowers may be to us as the favorites of the English muse, they are but exotics in our literature. If our poets would be true to the nature which they pretend to describe, they should stop repeating a faded literary tradition and seize the characteristic features of our landscape. In most of the earlier American poets, nature is so little distinctive that one may well ask *ubi gentium sumus?* Percival stocks the Connecticut woods with roses, ivy, jessamine, myrtle, etc., although the anemone and houstonia find a place there on occasion. In Drake's "Culprit Fay" we recognize gratefully the white involucres of the dogwood tree and the spicy smell of sassafras; but who would look for a four-o'clock growing wild on the banks of the Hudson, or think to see a skylark spring from Yankee turf?

Bryant, so far as I know, was the first to paint truthfully the details of New England scenery. In his "Death of the Flowers" the local coloring is not to be mistaken; this is the New England Indian summer and nothing else, and —

"on the hill, the goldenrod, and the aster in the wood,
And the yellow sunflower by the brook,"

belong to our fresh experience and not to the *hortus siccus* of the English poets. Bryant, too, has made the fringed gentian classical, and we are pleased to find in his pages the yellow violet and that rose-colored wood-flower, the spring beauty or claytonia. But much of Bryant's descriptive poetry, though never untrue, has the blur of indistinctness on it. The unsatisfactory feeling that it gives — a feeling of tameness and coldness — is owing partly to his constant use of the general instead of the specific. In their dealings with nature Emerson, Lowell, Whittier, and above all, Thoreau, have a stronger smack of the soil, a closer observation, and fuller telling of particulars. Where Bryant has a tree, Emerson has a pine; where Bryant has a bird, Lowell has a June bobolink; and as to Thoreau, he is precision itself, and where Bryant saw some conventional "flower,"

"*He* saw beneath dim aisles in odorous beds,
The slight Linnæa hang its twin-born heads."

Within a generation our poets have begun to take a more intimate view of nature. Formerly in literature, as in philosophy, the world was made for man. Flowers were ornaments, collected in nosegays, chaplets, and parterres. They were used "to deck the bridegroom's posies," or "to strew the laureat hearse where Lycid lies." But observation has taught us that the notes of birds, the scents of flowers, and the colors of both are calculated, first of all, for their own uses: in birds, to attract their mates; in flowers, to draw the insects which are the agents of their fertilization. This, with other adaptions which science is daily revealing, has given each plant an individuality and almost an intelligence of its own. In this point of view it becomes, for æsthetic as well as scientific ends, a living creature, and not a mere shade of color in a bouquet. The poet leaves the garden and becomes a naturalist, seeking the wild orchid in its native haunts, noting its habits, its blossoming time, and what companions surround it. In this way of looking at things, a huckleberry pasture or a cranberry swamp is worth all the gardens of Gulistan. In the windows of print-shops you see

no longer the old-fashioned "flower-pieces," stiffly arranged nosegays, and vases of cut flowers; but "studies," — perhaps a dead log overrun with the Virginia creeper; perhaps a square foot of foreground covered with the little round leaves and scarlet berries of the mitchella.

This change in the treatment of nature by poets and painters has probably been helped by the pre-Raphaelite movement in art, of which Mr. Ruskin was a popular preacher. Also by the increased interest in natural science, which has made every man an observer. Also, thirdly, by that pantheistic view of the universe which Emerson took from Goethe (mixing it with the transcendentalism of Kant), and which makes each object and aspect of nature an emanation from the world-soul. This thought is seen in Emerson's well-known lines on the rhodora, a beautiful rose-colored flower of the heath family, opening in wet woods in early spring: —

> "Why thou wert there, O rival of the rose!
> I never thought to ask, I never knew,
> But, in my simple ignorance, suppose
> The self-same Power that brought me there
> brought you.

Wordsworth saw nature subjectively, projecting his personality into her, drawing moral

lessons and human analogies from celandine and daffodil. Thoreau sought to realize the objective life of nature, identifying himself with the moose, the mountain, and the pine. Following in the logger's trail, he asked the primeval wilderness for its secret. He listened, with his ear close to the ground, for the voice of the earth. He strove to articulate the thought of Ktaadn, and to sympathize with the Cape Cod breakers in their indifference to the shipwrecked bodies which they cast upon the beach. But "himself from *man* he could not free." We sympathize with nature only as interpreted by man.

Doubtless, therefore, the poets will be able to utilize in their art only those blossoms which are near to human experience, — those which grow about our dwellings; those wild ones which are so common as to form links of association for us; or those rarer ones which have beauty or fragrance appealing directly to our human senses. Let us notice a few of the members of our American flora which have already taken places in the national literature and affections, or which are worthy of a place there. Perhaps the white water lily is our "bright, consummate flower," both from its pure beauty, its sweet, powerful odor, and its poeti-

cal habit of growth. Nothing in nature is more perfect than a lake with wooded shores, and here and there a marshy river-mouth where flocks of these glorious blossoms lie sunning among their pads. The spiritual suggestiveness of this flower made it a favorite with Hawthorne. In the closing passages of Whittier's "Snow-Bound" it leaves a fragrance which lingers when the book is closed.

But there are other aquatic plants deserving of more attention than they have yet received. Emerson says, "In July the blue pontederia, or pickerel-weed, blooms in large beds in the shallow parts of our pleasant river [the Concord] and swarms with yellow butterflies in continual motion. Art cannot rival this pomp of purple and gold." Then there is the *Polygonum amphibium*, in late summer spreading a rosy flush over the water. Thoreau saw it on the Concord, on August 31, 1839, and said that "its narrow strip of red looked very rare and precious."

The trailing arbutus —

> "Which comes before the swallow dares and takes
> The winds of March with beauty" —

is the chief glory of the New England spring. Its rosy, apple-scented blooms are eagerly

sought, treading proverbially so close on the heels of winter that you may find them sometimes by the dissolving edges of a snow-bank. This flower has been sung by many poets, but perhaps by none more gracefully than by Mr. Gideon Hollister. By the way, Professor Lane's effort, in a recent number of the *Nation*, to get the word restored to its proper pronunciation — árbutus *not* arbútus — ought to be seconded by botanists, as well as by Latinists.

The scarlet cardinal (most happily named) is another favorite. It is startling to come on a band of these by the margin of a woodland pool, their gorgeous spikes reflected in the water. Our eyes, accustomed to the faint pink of the wild geranium, refuse to believe that this tropical red can be at home in the northern woods.

The pearly everlasting — "the fadeless flower with the silvery leaf" — is familiar as a kinsman of the *edelweiss*, and a kind of Puritan amaranth or symbol of immortality. As such, its rustling blossoms are bound up into funeral wreaths. Its cousin, the common everlasting, seems equally worthy of attention. It flowers in dry pastures where the grasses are yellowing in the September sunshine. With its woolly leaves, and warm, herby smell, it suggests a

perfumed rose-blanket. There hangs about it a forecast of winter comforts, together with what Howells calls, "the subtle sentiment of the decaying summer." The west wind — "the breath of autumn's being" — comes scented with this flower.

One of our handsomest wild flowers is the impatiens or jewel-weed. Its orange-hued pendants have a reptilian grace, and

> "In their gold coats, spots you see;
> Those be rubies, fairy favors:
> In those freckles live their savors."

Dr. Holmes has noticed this flower in a passage in "Elsie Venner," in which he describes the season of the year when the rattlesnake's venom is deadliest.

The orchids, structurally the most highly specialized and interesting of plants, also furnish many of our showiest wild flowers. The great yellow or purple pouches of the Cypripedium meet the eyes with an almost weird effect in the sombre shadow of hemlock groves. Thoreau notices that the great purple fringed orchis is one of the most characteristic flowers in the river meadows of the Maine wilderness. Touching one member of this family — the *Arethusa* — Dr. Gray is betrayed into saying,

"a charming little plant, in wet bogs, North." As for the ram's head Cypripedium, of which there are rumors in the botanists, I have been on its trail for years, but have never overtaken it. Until I find it the woods hold a mystery for me which I would be almost sorry to have them lose.

It may be merely fancy, or the force of association, but there seems often to be an æsthetic fitness in the habitat of plants. Take, for instance, the stramonium, or Jamestown weed. You will find it growing rankly in the poorest soils, in railroad cuts, in the dooryards of factories, among scrap tin and piles of rusty iron, and in waste lots unsightly with ash-heaps, rubbish, and cast off crinoline. Here it flourishes in company with sunflowers, burdock, ragweed, prince's feather, (*Polygonum orientale*) and other coarse "escaped" weeds. Its lilac-tinted blossoms of papery tissue are not without a certain flaunting beauty; but with its rank foliage, poisonous juice, and narcotic smell, it seems the congenial outgrowth and expression of the unclean spots in which it roots.

Contrast with this the characteristic flowers in dry hilly woods of oak and pine. They are such as one would look for in just such places,

little smooth-stemmed fragrant blossoms of cleanly habit. There is the *Smilacena bifolia* in May, with a spike of delicate white stars rising from between a pair of handsome leaves and emitting an odor like the lily of the valley. There is the pipsissewa, with marbled leaves and bearing in early summer a flesh-colored blossom with a breath so powerful that it fills the whole underwood with sweetness. There is the partridge berry (*Mitchella repens*), whose round, dark-green leaves with their whitish midribs embroider at all seasons the forest carpet of brown pine needles. In fall and spring its red berries are familiar, and at midsummer it has blossoms arranged in pairs, resembling Grecian urns in their marble whiteness and elegance of form, frosted with a fleecy bloom in the throat of the corolla, and exhaling the most exquisite of all wood scents. Succeeding these in August are the waxy, parasitic growths known as Indian pipes or corpse flowers; and about the same time the flowers of the rattlesnake plantain, whose handsomely veined leaves are more noticeable than its blossoms.

It is interesting to trace the successive stages in the life of a plant, and to recognize it later in the year in some new form of beauty. Thus

the common wild geranium, which filled the woods in early June with lilac flowers, bears in late summer a still richer crop of scarlet leaves, before the rest of the foliage has begun to turn save here and there a sumach. So you will find through the winter the rich maroon leaves of the hepatica, whose blue blossoms were earliest out in spring. The *Smilacena racemosa* produces in August a cluster of berries, mottled like birds' eggs. The baneberry, which flowered in May, affords later a bunch of curious white berries adhering lightly to their coral stalks, and looking like the china eyes pulled out of wax dolls.

Even in winter the woods are never without interest. To say nothing of the laurels, ground pines, and other low evergreens, you will sometimes find in February a few green shoots prematurely forced out in some sheltered sand-bank in an angle of the brook, where the moistness and the rays of the sun have made a natural hotbed.

The rocks have a flora of their own, beginning in spring with the saxifrage (a contemporary of the anemone), and including the columbine, the corydalis (cousin of the garden "bleeding-heart"), the Venus's looking-glass (*Specularia perfoliata*), the harebell, the rock

rose (*Helianthemum canadense*), and the prickly-pear cactus. Of these the columbine, the harebell, and the corydalis have nodding flowers, a shape — ornamentally — well-fitted for blossoms hanging in fringes from high rocks. I fear, however, that Mr. Darwin would not recognize this as a legitimate adaptation. The Specularia has peculiar, ruffling leaves, reminding one strongly of the pantalets on very little girls.

Between the exogens and endogens, the two great classes of flowering plants, there is not only that fundamental structural distinction known to botanists, but likewise a true though unscientific difference in the way in which they affect us artistically. This may be best expressed by noting that the former has given to art and literature the rose, as its type, while the latter has given the lily. In general the endogens impress us, when compared to the exogens, as living a cold, reptilian life, shunning warm soils but haunting bogs and forests; destitute of woody fibre and of down on leaves or branches; having succulent stems and smooth, lush leaves with parallel veins. Of the seventeen families of endogens represented in our Northern states, nine are aquatic or marsh plants throughout all the genera native here. To the endogens belong the grasses,

rushes, sedges, lilies, orchids, pond weeds, etc. The grasses aside, our native endogens contribute to human food nothing but the wild leek and the sweet flag.

The year keeps a floral almanac. Thoreau boasted that, if put to sleep in a swamp, he could tell the date on awaking by the plants in bloom.

> "How could such sweet and wholesome hours
> Be reckoned but with herbs and flowers?"

The season opens and closes with blue, with the liver-leaf in March, and the fringed gentian in November. In spring the characteristic hues are white and blue: the houstonia in the meadows; the dogwood, anemones, and violets in the woods. But buttercups and dandelions (imported weeds) make a strong show of yellow. With the summer heats the finer flowers retreat into recesses of damp woods, leaving the fields to mayweed and other *Compositæ*. In August and September comes a great flush of purple and yellow. The swamps are gay with ironweed and goldenrod, the waysides with toad-flax and evening primroses; while the numerous members of the mint, pulse, and figwort families contribute to the two prevailing colors.

Nature in our climate lays on her reds spar-

ingly, except in the item of autumn leaves. Next after the cardinal, the brightest red of late summer is the magenta of the rhexia, or meadow beauty. The magenta is not a winning color every year, which accounts, perhaps, for the unusual scarcity of the flower sometimes in meadows which I have seen filled with it in happier seasons. One of the prettiest red flowers of early summer is the *Polygala paucifolia*, or flowering wintergreen, which with its tuft, or fringe, and spread wings looks like some floral insect "on tiptoe for a flight." Then there are the spiræas; the kalmia, or American laurel, with which the woods are splendid in June; and the azalea, usually and wrongfully called wild honeysuckle.

In closing, it may not be amiss to express the gratitude with which an æsthetic botanist hails those occasional touches of humor or of recognition for the merely beautiful which will creep into the manuals, spite of the severity of science. They often have a fine, repressed enthusiasm in their mention of "rich, damp woods," the habitat of some "spectabile" or "grandiflora." It is nice to find the following touch of fancy on the part of the old herbalists in Dr. Gray's description of the cotton rose: "*F. Germanica*, German Cotton Rose, or *Herba Impia* of the

old herbalists, branches with a new generation of clustered heads rising out of the parent cluster at the top of the stem (as if undutifully exalting themselves)." It is also funny when the author testily remarks of the genus Funkia "named for one Funk, a German botanist." It *is* too bad that so handsome a flower as the day-lily should have to immortalize "one Funk." And, finally, when Dr. Gray, in describing the *Rhus toxicodendron*, or poison ivy, concludes with something of the energy of personal experience, "a vile pest," we are sure that every botanist who has tried it, æsthetic or otherwise, will go along with him.

THE ENGLISH LYRIC

THE ENGLISH LYRIC

THE simple classification of the Greeks, which Matthew Arnold thinks still the best, does not fully answer the conditions of our composite modern literature. In the various kinds of Greek poetry, the composition of the piece had a direct reference to its instrumentation, to the means by which it was to be rendered. Their dramas were meant to be acted on the stage, their epics to be recited to a company of listeners, their lyrics to be sung to the lyre or the flute. But nowadays our dramatic poetry is not acted, our epic not recited, our lyric is not sung. They are all alike read. *Plays* are acted, *stories* are told, *songs* are sung, but they are not literature. Accordingly definitions have changed, and some more inward principle of classification has been sought by which a poem that is essentially lyrical can be marked off from other kinds. Critics have commonly agreed to find this distinguishing mark in the quality of subjectivity. They say that lyrical poetry is the poetry of self-expression, that it

is intimate and personal. Perhaps for a formal definition, Brunetière's may serve as well as another. "Lyric poetry," he says, "is the expression of the personal feelings of the poet translated into rhythms analogous to the nature of his emotion." The last clause may deserve our attention for a moment: "rhythms analogous to the nature of his emotion"; *i.e.* the verse is or should be flexible, sensitive in its response to the poet's changing moods. The critic goes on to declare that this conformity of the rhythmic movement to the emotion is in itself enough to make a poem truly lyrical, and that this "supple, ductile, and infinitely undulating character" of the verse is the musical element in lyric poetry, the part still subsisting in it of the song, the survival or the memory in it of its origin.

In modern poetry literary kinds are apt to run together and the lines between them to get rubbed out. Tragedy and comedy mix; the romance forces itself upon the drama; the lyric intrudes into the epic when Milton laments his blindness; lyricism runs riot all through Victor Hugo's plays. There is many an old minstrel ballad of which it would be hard to say whether it is more epic or dramatic or lyric. It tells a story, has some dia-

logue, and voices the emotions of the poet, who is also, it may be, an actor in the story; and the whole of it was sung to the accompaniment of a stringed instrument, and had a burden or chorus which was taken up and carried by the audience. But we have not to do at present with work that is epic or dramatic in form, though lyrical in spirit. Our subject is the formal lyric, concerning which it is generally agreed, that, as it is properly the expression of a single emotion, so it should have a certain brevity; and the more intense the emotion, the shorter the poem.

In that very favorite and choice anthology, "Palgrave's Golden Treasury of Songs and Lyrics," the title recognizes the distinction between the primitive and the modern use of the term. All songs are lyrics, but not all lyrics are songs. Mr. Palgrave's little volume includes Milton's "Il Penseroso," Gray's "Elegy," and many of Wordsworth's sonnets. Now, no one can imagine himself as singing these, nor even as singing pindaric odes like "The Progress of Poesy" and the "Intimations of Immortality." Wordsworth is more fully represented in the "Treasury" than any other poet. Yet Wordsworth's genius was not so lyrical as that of several of his contempora-

ries. And it has been noticed that in Wordsworth the lyrical unit, the momentary impulse from which the poet speaks, is usually a thought, while in Shelley it is a feeling. I am not aware that any poem of Wordsworth has been set to music.

We must give up, then, the antique purity, or the antique narrowness, of the lyric ideal. The modern literary lyric — the lyric of art — is not always, is not often, a song. The marriage of the voice and the lyre is not forgotten, but the tradition persists in our nomenclature only. Wordsworth's contemporaries used to speak of him as "the Bard of Rydal," as if he had been a blind harp player with long robe and flowing beard — some Harry the Minstrel or some son of Fingal — instead of a clerical-looking gentleman who walked up and down his garden path, dictating lines to his sister Dorothy which she wrote down on sheets of paper. The poetry books of that generation are full of things entitled "Stanzas for Music." They may have been for music, but music was not for them.

It was not always thus, even with the less popular lyric styles.

"If music and sweet poetry agree," says Richard Barnfield in the "Passionate Pilgrim," —

"If music and sweet poetry agree,
As they must needs, the sister and the brother,
Then must the love be great 'twixt thee and me,
Because thou lovest the one and I the other.
Dowden to thee is dear, whose heavenly touch
Upon the lute doth ravish human sense;
Spenser to me."

Have you ever seen a lute, that melon-shaped instrument, something like a mandolin, which is associated with the silken measures of Elizabethan courtly verse, as the crowd or six-stringed violin is associated with the old English minstrel ballad and the lyre with the odes of Sappho and Anacreon? The lute had from six to twenty-four strings and was played with the fingers of the right hand. Its lascivious pleasings tinkle through a century of song, from the time when Sir Thomas Wyatt, back in the days of Henry VIII, cries, "My lute, awake," to the time when the Puritan Milton complains, "It will ask more than the work of twenty licensers to examine all the lutes, the violins and the guitars in every house. . . . And who shall silence all the airs and madrigals that whisper softness in chambers?" This was our truly lyrical period, when "music and sweet poetry agreed." The lute lay on every window-seat and hung on the wall of every barber shop. Guests or customers took it up

and fingered it as a matter of course, and every one was expected to carry his part in a three-men's song or a song for four voices. It was a part of a lady's education "to play upon the virginals, lute and cittern, and to read prick-song at first sight"; and of a gentleman's "to sing his part sure and at first sight, and withal to play the same on viol or lute." A box of lutestrings was a common New Year's gift to a lady. In the old plays there is always some one at hand to touch the lute, when music is called for, sestine or canzone or madrigal or roundelay. Now and again the whole company "clap into 't roundly" and "rouse the night owl in a catch that will draw three souls out of one weaver." Sometimes these musical intermezzos are introduced upon one pretext or another, sometimes quite shamelessly, the stage direction abruptly announcing "Song."

England had then a national school of music and the work of the poets was set to notes by composers like Dowden, Byrd, Robert Jones, and Henry Lawes, whose art was known and valued abroad. Dowden was appointed lutanist to the King of Denmark, and other English musicians were in the service of the archduke of Austria and various German princes.

A great part of the work of English composers of the seventeenth century was printed on the Continent or is preserved in Continental manuscripts. Henry Lawes, a gentleman of the king's chapel, was a personal friend of Milton and wrote the airs to the songs in "Comus," — "Sweet echo" and "Sabrina fair." Milton addressed him a sonnet "on his airs." Milton's father was a musical composer and published a volume of airs for psalms and madrigals. Milton himself was a practical musician. His favorite instrument was the organ, but "to hear the lute well touched and artful voice warble immortal notes and Tuscan air" is one of the pleasures that he holds out in his invitation sonnet to Mr. Lawrence, — "Tuscan air," for this school of English composers had learned their art from Italy. Dr. Carpenter says that "Elizabethan music was a music perfectly fitted to song, slight and melodic." Slight it was, and popular tunes like "Green Sleeves" and "Fortune, my Foe" were purely melodic. They have to be harmonized for modern arrangement. But Chappell says that the scholastic or Italianate music — the courtly music — was devoted to counterpoint and figure, and that it is hard to pick out a tune from it which an unlearned ear can carry away. Alonzo

Ferrabosco, a man of English birth but Italian parentage, and a personal friend of Ben Jonson, published a volume of airs in 1609, and set to music, among other well-known pieces, Jonson's "Come, my Celia." Sometimes poet and musician were one. Dr. Thomas Campion, who printed four books of airs, was one of the best composers and also one of the sweetest song writers of his day. The Elizabethan tunes are described as largely in the minor key, thus giving a plaintive effect even to poetry that was gay or cheerful in sentiment. "I am never merry when I hear sweet music," Jessica says, and Jaques boasts that he can "suck melancholy out of a song as a weasel sucks eggs." The movement was often slow, and poetry was sung which we would not now think of singing, poetry written in long measures, for example. We seldom sing verse of more than four metric accents to the line, since the so-called long metre of the hymn-books — the old fourteener — is broken practically into two lines or staves by the musical rest. But Elizabethan sonnets were not infrequently set to music, as we know was the custom in Italy, and as the etymology of the word implies, — *suonare*. It is rather odd to read that George Herbert sent for a lute when he was on his death-bed and

sang to it his poem entitled "Sunday," in which the lyric impulse struggles through a tangle of conceits. Herbert, whom Emerson calls "the sweet psalmist of the seventeenth century," was a passionate lover of music. He played upon several instruments, and used to walk in every week from his little church at Bemerton to the choir service at Salisbury Cathedral. But his own devotional verse, very beautiful in feeling and ingenious in thought, is so quaintly mannerized and often so careless in its numbers — in effect so unlyrical — that the only piece of Herbert's which tempts one to sing it is the familiar —

"Sweet day, so cool, so calm, so bright,
The bridal of the earth and sky,
The dew shall weep thy fall to-night,
For thou must die."

This has song quality, with its simplicity of expression, its open vowels, and its cadence or dying fall at the close. Chappell gives it with the notes from an old music-book, but with the words sadly altered and the short last line unwarrantably lengthened.

A song which means to be sung should voice universal human emotions. It should not be subtle or learned. It should use imagery and figures of speech sparingly and avoid decora-

tion. During our Civil War the Union armies had got hold of a noble marching chorus, —

"John Brown's body lies a-mouldering in the grave,
His soul is marching on."

Nothing could be better than this, but the chorus was all there was of it. It was felt that it was worthy of a more dignified context than the threat to hang Jeff Davis to a sour apple tree, and efforts were made to supply the want. The most successful of these was Mrs. Howe's "Battle Hymn of the Republic," in many ways an impressive poem, Biblical in phrase and in part perhaps singable, though certainly not singable as a whole. But the soldiers would not adopt it. They would not, or did not, sing such lines as these: —

"In the beauty of the lilies, Christ was born across the sea,
With the glory in his bosom that transfigures you and me."

The imagery was too fine; the appeal was feminine. The words did not fit the chorus and the spirit of marching men.

There is a great mass of Elizabethan lyrical verse extant in the collected works of known authors: in the sonnet sequences of Spenser, Shakspere, Drayton, Daniel, Watson, and

many others; scattered through plays and romances; preserved in miscellanies with fanciful titles, like "England's Helicon," "The Phœnix Nest," "The Arbour of Amorous Delights"; and, lastly, in the numerous song-books in print or manuscript where the music is given with the words.

Mr. Bullen, the collector of these treasures, says that song writing is a lost art. The reader who turns the pages of such a florilegium will be apt to find its occasional beauties, as Pope found them, —

> "Like twinkling stars the miscellanies o'er,
> One simile that solitary shines
> In the dry desert of a thousand lines."

But Pope was looking for similes; he was looking for those points and "strong lines" which, Izaak Walton complains, were coming into vogue in his day, and to which the honest angler preferred that "old-fashioned poetry but choicely good" which the milkmaid sang him: Kit Marlowe's charmingly rococo little idyl, "Come live with me and be my love," a snatch of which is warbled by Sir Hugh Evans in the "Merry Wives of Windsor." Shakspere himself, a generation earlier, makes this same complaint, that lyrical poetry is becoming sophisticated.

"Now, good Cesario, but that piece of song,
That old and antique song we heard last night;
Methought it did relieve my passion much,
More than light airs and recollected terms
Of these most brisk and giddy paced times. . . .
Mark it, Cesario, it is old and plain;
The spinsters and the knitters in the sun
And the free maids that weave their thread with bones
Do use to chant it: it is silly sooth
And dallies with the innocence of love
Like the old age."

England was full of these old songs, songs that, as Bishop Hall says, were "sung to the wheel and sung unto the pail," — *i.e.* by the spinners and the milkmaids. Shakspere has caught their perfect aura and reproduced them in all their simple variety; as the hunting-song, "What shall he have that killed the deer?" the drinking-song; the shepherd's song; the sailor's song; the serenade; the dawn-song or alba, such as "that wonderful sweet air with admirable rich words to it" which the musicians sing in Imogen's anteroom, — "Hark, hark, the lark at heaven's gate sings;" the lullaby or cradle-song; the dirge, "Come away, come away, death," or "He is dead and gone, lady;" the witch's charm; the marriage song; the song for Shrovetide or St. Valentine's Day, or the May-day song to welcome in the spring,

"It was a lover and his lass," or "When daffodils begin to peer;" songs for the road, "Jog on, jog on the foot-path way;" the fool's jig, or nonsense song, —

> "When and I was but a little tiny boy,
> With heigh ho the wind and the rain;"

the pedler's song, who cries his wares; the willow song of forsaken love; the song of lovers meeting, "Mistress mine, where are you roaming?" besides a score of lovely, unclassifiable ditties, like "Where the bee sucks" and "Under the greenwood tree." The stage is still in possession of the traditional airs to which some of these were sung in the seventeenth century and possibly in Shakspere's own theatre. The music of Ophelia's songs in "Hamlet" is very old.

This is the essence of a song-lyric, that when we read it or hear it read, we want to sing it. There is a lilt in the language which calls for musical rendering or accompaniment. Take the repetend of the song which appears first in Farquhar's "Recruiting Officer," but is doubtless much older, "Over the hills and far away." Does it not *ask* to be sung? Or, again, the Jacobite ballad-scrap which Scott adapted in one of his little poems: —

"He turned his charger as he spake
Upon the river shore;
He gave the bridle reins a shake,
Said adieu for evermore, my love,
Adieu for evermore."

Carlyle says that "no songs, since the little careless catches and, as it were, drops of song which Shakspere has here and there sprinkled over his plays, fulfil this condition" — of singableness — "in nearly the same degree as most of Burns's do." Burns is, upon the whole, the foremost of British song writers. But it is true of Scotch lyric in general, as distinguished from English, that it can be sung and actually is sung. It is true of Allan Cunningham's sea-song, "A wet sheet and a flowing sea," and of Campbell's war-song, "Ye mariners of England," though both of these are in the Southern English, not in dialect. The reason I take to be that the Scotch have behind them a wealth of folk-poems, as well as a storehouse of national airs to which these are easily fitted. I certainly would not rank Scott above Shelley or Keats as a lyric poet, in the wider sense of the term. But the "Ode to a Nightingale" and the "Ode to the West Wind" are not song-lyrics, while nearly all of Scott's simpler ballads suggest a tune. Every one is familiar

with the air of "Jock o' Hazeldean," and equally tunable are such things as —

> "O Brignal banks are wild and fair
> And Greta woods are green;"

or,

> "A lightsome eye, a soldier's mien,
> A feather of the blue,
> A doublet of the Lincoln green,
> Were all of me ye knew, fair maid,
> Were all of me ye knew."

But to return to the Elizabethans. In looking through a collection like Bell's "Songs from the Dramatists" or Bullen's "Lyrics from Elizabethan Romances and Song Books," one is struck with the originality and variety of simple stanza forms, but with the monotony of theme. A majority of the songs are love-songs. Such an anthology is a "box where sweets compacted lie," and the reader is soon surfeited. If we wish for depth of thought and elaborate art, we must look for them in contemporary work of another kind, — in Shakspere's sonnets and the so-called "greater lyric," — poems like Spenser's "Prothalamium" and "Epithalamium," and his platonic hymns to "Love and Beauty." The charm of these minor lyrics lies in their dewy freshness, their unpremeditated ease and grace, their sudden

and quite inimitable felicities of phrase. The verse breaks over its roughnesses like a brook over the pebbles, and the whole is as artless as the whistle of the quail. Such is the note struck in Nash's "Spring, the sweet spring"; Constable's —

> "Diaphenia like the daffadowndilly,
> White as the sun, fair as the lily";

Heywood's "Pack, clouds, away, and welcome day;" Barnfield's —

> "King Pandion he is dead,
> All thy friends are lapped in lead;"

Lodge's —

> "Love in my bosom like a bee
> Doth suck his sweet;
> Now with his wings he plays with me,
> Now with his feet;"

Webster's "Call for the robin redbreast and the wren;" Dekker's "Art thou poor, yet hast thou golden slumbers?" Fletcher's —

> "Lay a garland on my hearse
> Of the dismal yew;"

Walter Raleigh's —

> "As you came from the holy land
> Of Walsinghame,
> Met you not with my true love
> By the way as you came?"

With this, that exulting note of the Renaissance, that delight in sensuous beauty, which finds its largest utterance in Spenser, but is heard again in pieces like the "Siren's Song" of William Browne, —

> "Steer hither, steer your wingéd pines,
> All beaten mariners,"

or in Lodge's —

> "With orient pearl, with ruby red,
> With marble white, with sapphire blue,
> Her body every way is fed,
> Yet soft to touch and sweet in view,
> Heigh ho! fair Rosalind!"

and finally reaches a height of lyric rapture in the fine extravagance of Shakspere's —

> "Take, O take those lips away
> That so sweetly were forsworn,
> And those eyes, the break of day,
> Lights that do mislead the morn."

When we discover this quality in modern verse, we recognize it as Elizabethan. There is much of it in Keats, where it is contagion; in Beddoes's "Death's Jest Book," where it is imitation; and in Blake's "Songs of Innocence," where it is unconscious likeness, as in, —

> "Piping down the valleys wild,
> Piping songs of pleasant glee."

The Renaissance joy of life and passion for beauty prolongs itself in the second generation in the work of Robert Herrick, who sang —

"of brooks, of blossoms, birds and bowers,
Of April, May, of June and July flowers;
I sing of Maypoles, hock-carts, wassails, wakes,
Of bridegrooms, brides, and of their bridal cakes, . . .
I sing of dews, of rains, and, piece by piece,
Of balm, of oil, of spice and ambergris.
I sing of times trans-shifting, and I write
How roses first came red and lilies white.
I write of groves, of twilights, and I sing
The court of Mab and of the Fairy King.
I write of Hell; I sing, and ever shall,
Of Heaven, and hope to have it after all."

But far other was the song of hell and heaven chanted by Herrick's greatest contemporary; and the pipings of the English Catullus — the poet of glow-worms and cherries and daffodils and Julia's silks — fell unheeded upon the ears of a strenuous time. Chappell gives the music to Herrick's "Gather ye rosebuds while ye may" from several music-books printed about 1660. His song to Anthea, —

"Bid me to live and I will live,
Thy protestant to be,"

is sung to-day, but I believe the air is modern. Herrick is now recognized as one of the most

exquisite of English lyrists. But for nearly two centuries oblivion covered him.

Herrick apart, the lyrical poetry of the Stuart period, while gaining in art, loses something of nature. New strings were added to the lyre, but they had not the sweetness, the first fine careless rapture of the old. The masters of this school were Ben Jonson and Dr. Donne. Already in Jonson, Shakspere's "wood-notes wild" have given place to finish of execution. There is always some classic lurking behind Jonson's verse. His "Come, my Celia," treats a *motif* from Catullus. His finest song, the magnificent "Drink to me only with thine eyes," is from the Greek prose of Philostratus. Yet here the transcendent touch is Jonson's —

> "The thirst that from the soul doth rise
> Doth ask a drink divine."

The air of this is old and is found in Hullah's "Song Book."

As for John Donne, that greatly misunderstood and most fascinating genius, — an original artist, too, in his own strange and subtle way, — there is a strong pulse-beat in his rugged verse, but it is not the verse of a lutanist. Its music is heard in the long climacteric passages of that most remarkable of elegies, "On the Death of

Mistress Elizabeth Drury." Donne disdained smoothness, though he could be smooth on occasion; and one of his songs, at least, was set to music, the one beginning, —

"Stay, O sweet, and do not rise,
The light that shines comes from thine eyes;
The day breaks not, it is my heart,
Because that thou and I must part."

The footprints of Jonson and Donne can easily be followed in most of the poets of the reigns of James and Charles I, — in Carew, Herrick, Lovelace, Herbert, Randolph, Crashaw, and Vaughan. But it cannot be said that Jonson's classical polish and Donne's conceited quaintness were influences favorable to the song-lyric. The pieces which were set to popular airs and sung were mostly of a nimbler kind, things like Suckling's "Ballad on a Wedding" and Wither's "If She be not Fair for Me," the tunes to both of which are given by Chappell.

Of course Milton is the central figure of that time, and of course Milton in a way is lyrical, especially in the sonnet, to which he gave a new extension. The Elizabethan sonnet — a looser form, in three quatrains and a closing couplet — had been dedicated mainly to love. Milton

returned to the strict Italian form — octave and sestet — and shaped it to religious and public ends. "In his hands the thing became a trumpet," said Wordsworth. The trumpet, indeed, or the organ was Milton's instrument, not the lyre. His sonnet on the Vaudois massacre, "Avenge, O Lord, thy slaughtered saints," is a collect in verse, as has been said, but it is also a dithyrambic, instinct with passion, lyrical, as Tyrtæus and Theodore Körner are lyrical. This identification of the poet with more impersonal interests, with the spirit of a people or a cause, is felt in much of the lyrical verse of the English Civil War ; in Milton and Marvell especially, on the popular side, and equally in the songs of the cavaliers. All know Lovelace's songs, "To Lucasta, on going to the Wars," and "To Althæa from Prison." A still higher strain of loyal feeling is struck in the famous lines of Montrose. Look at Vandyke's portrait of Prince Rupert, with its lady's face and dare-devil eyes, and then see how its spirit is interpreted in Montrose's stanza, — the gay courage, the gamester's recklessness, —

> "He either fears his fate too much
> Or his deserts are small,
> That dares not put it to the touch
> To gain or lose it all."

After Milton the sonnet disappeared from English poetry for a century. But from his generation dates a new lyric form, the pindaric, or pseudo-pindaric ode, — an exotic, like the pastoral, but with a distinguished history as a naturalized product. Cowley took credit for its introduction, ignoring the fact that Jonson had written one pindaric of much stricter form than his own. Cowley's pindarics are quite irregular, as are Dryden's two St. Cecilia odes, Wordsworth's "Intimations of Immortality," and Lowell's "Commemoration Ode"; while Gray, in his "Progress of Poesy" and "The Bard," conformed to the classic structure. Strophe, anti-strophe and epode, in the odes of Pindar, answered to the Greek music and to the movements of the choral dance. But there is nothing corresponding to this in English; here the pindaric structure is arbitrary, — mechanical, not organic. It is like a deaf man dancing to the motions of the orchestra, and not hearing the notes.

On the other hand, the looser or freer form of the ode, which is pindaric only in name, has sometimes proved a noble instrument in the hands of an artist capable of using it. The lines of uneven length, the rhymes recurring at unequal intervals, the stanzas admitting vari-

ations from a fixed type, constitute a flexible medium, like the intricate verse paragraphs in "Lycidas." Lowell says that "Gray's 'Progress of Poesy' over-flies all other English lyrics like an eagle." But, to my mind, Lowell's own "Commemoration Ode" is much better. Swinburne complains of the harshness of the verse and of the flat passages between the climaxes. But when the verse does catch fire it burns clear and hot.

I may remark, in passing, on the singular poverty of English literature in the patriotic lyric. Elizabethan poetry offers a single good specimen, Drayton's spirited "Ode to the Cambro-Britons on Their Harp": "Fair stood the wind for France."

I am not alone in preferring this to Tennyson's "Charge of the Light Brigade," which it resembles in its stanza form, though it more exactly resembles Longfellow's "Skeleton in Armor." After Dryden, lyrical poetry suffers an almost total eclipse for a full century. Mr. Palgrave's "Treasury" admits only one contribution from Pope, and those who know Pope are surprised to find even that one in such company. Here and there a song breaks the silence, Gay's "Black-eyed Susan" or the "Sally in our Alley" of Henry Carey, himself a musical

composer; here and there a literary lyric with tuneful quality, an ode of Gray, or the flute voice of Collins, "How sleep the brave," or "To fair Fidele's grassy tomb."

With the publication of the "Lyrical Ballads" in 1798 begins the second, and the greatest, period of English lyric poetry. Nearly half of Mr. Palgrave's anthology is drawn from verse composed during the first thirty years of the nineteenth century. If to this be added the work of Tennyson and the Brownings, of Arnold, Rossetti, Clough, Morris, Swinburne, O'Shaughnessy, and many others, to say nothing of American and Colonial poets, it is obvious how greatly more copious in lyric verse is the century now closed than any of its predecessors. And I believe that, if an impartial standard be applied, its value will be found, upon the whole, to be higher. Mr. Palgrave thinks that this lyrical outburst is "traceable to the increasingly subjective temper of the age," and he finds that the work of our modern lyrists is "apt to be less concentrated than that of their best predecessors."

In glancing at this immense *corpus poetarum* I shall confine myself to a single point of comparison between the older and later schools of English lyric poetry. It will be observed that,

not only is the compass of the modern lyre greater, not only does nineteenth-century poetry deal with a wider range of emotions, and deal with them more intellectually, but the evolution of technic has been carried much further. There is nothing in the comparatively simple Elizabethan measures to compare with such effects as are wrought by language and verse in Coleridge's "Kubla Khan," in Poe's "Raven," Scott's "Pibroch of Donald Dhu," Tennyson's "Bugle Song," and the choruses in Swinburne's "Atalanta." But these things are not sung. At its highest point of technical accomplishment our lyric poetry is least lyrical. The explanation of the paradox lies in the mutual relations of music and verse. Sidney Lanier, a practitioner of both arts, made an acute analysis of their common elements in his "Science of English Verse." They both have rhythm and what he calls tone-color. Music alone has harmony, but pitch or inflection in speech has some correspondence with tune in music. Still, when all is done, they are not identical. The composer works with the thirteen tones and semitones of the musical scale. The poet's means are rhythm, accent, rhyme, assonance, alliteration, vowel distribution, and the like. Hence when we speak of verse as musical, we speak by anal-

ogy and not literally; for only those sounds which are produced by certain rates of vibration are recognized by the ear as musical sounds, and these are not the sounds which occur in spoken verse.

Now, in a song, both words and music should be simple and the latter should be ancillary to the former. But as the two arts become differentiated, each develops its own resources independently to a point where union becomes difficult. The music grows so rich and complex that it overwhelms the words which it ought to interpret. It deals more and more with purely musical ideas, with unformulated emotion. In a modern opera we care nothing about the libretto and can seldom distinguish the words even of a solo. One reason given for the decline of the Elizabethan madrigals and other vocal music after 1600 was the rapidly increasing cultivation of instrumental concert music. Books of airs were now published arranged for four, five, and six instruments. On the other hand, lyrical poetry being, as it were, deserted by music and let to go its own way, begins to rely more upon the resources of the spoken word, considered not merely as the sign of an idea, but as a volume of sound. It invents more cunning devices of metre, rhyme, stanza

formation, and the like, — in short, a music of its own.

Our modern poetry, then, touches its high-water mark, not in the song-lyric, but in the lyric of art. Who is the typical lyrist of the first generation of the nineteenth century? Is it Tom Moore, or is it Shelley? The question needs no answer, and yet Moore was incomparably the better song writer. His "Irish Melodies" were written to old airs like "The Twisting of the Rope" and "The Fox's Sleep." His "Araby's Daughter" and "Oft in the Stilly Night" and "Those Evening Bells" and "The Last Rose of Summer," set to operatic tunes, are popular yet and justly so. Moore was a natural musician and used to sing and play his own songs to the piano. Shelley and Coleridge had little ear for music, and Rossetti disliked it. Shelley's "Lines to an Indian Air" have been set to music, but many a common serenade is more popular and perhaps more really singable. The passion is too intense, the imagery too intoxicating.

"I arise from dreams of thee, in the first sweet sleep of night,
When the winds are breathing low and the stars are shining bright. . . .
The wandering airs they faint on the dark, the silent stream,

The champak odors fail like sweet thoughts in a dream,
The nightingale's complaint it dies upon her heart,
As I must die on thine, O belovéd, as thou art!"

Do these lines need music? And yet here is the lyric cry if it is anywhere. Whether or not Shelley is the foremost of English lyrical poets, as has been maintained, he is at all events the most lyrical. He is like the angel Israfel, whose heartstrings were a lute. His vibrant nature trembled to every breath and summoned the wind to come and play upon it, —

"Make me thy lyre even as the forest is."

If I wished, then, to illustrate the sheer metrical triumphs of our contemporary lyric, to show how near words can come to music, I would choose, not a song, but something like the splendid elegiacs of "Hesperia," or a choral passage from the "Atalanta," — say the one which opens, —

"When the hounds of spring are on winter's traces,
The mother of months in meadow or plain
Fills the shadows and windy places
With lisp of leaves and ripple of rain."

This is not singable as the songs of Heine and Burns are singable. Indeed, the only true song that I remember in Swinburne is the little Elizabethan piece entitled "A Match," a stanza

of which puts into a figure something of what I have been saying about the marriage of music and verse: —

"If I were what the words are,
And love were like the tune,
With double sound and single
Delight our lips would mingle,
With kisses glad as birds are
That get sweet rain at noon,
If I were what the words are
And love were like the tune."

DIALECT ON THE OLD STAGE

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In that monumental work of Alexander J. Ellis — "Early English Pronunciation" — a Yale reader feels himself very much at home among the numerous citations from the lexicographers, Webster and Worcester, from Professors James Hadley and Whitney, from Dr. Hammond Trumbull, and from that clever *dilettante* who endowed the Bristed scholarship, and who testifies that when he was "a boy at Yale College (Conn.) in 1839, some of the older professors said *fort'n* and *natur'*," for *fortune* and *nature*. Together with these dignified authorities, Mr. Ellis cites a number of American humorists, in illustration of local pronunciations. In the number is my fellow-alumnus — by brevet — Mark Twain. I doubt whether the author of "The Jumping Frog" ever expected to be levied on in this way for scientific purposes. But it seems to me not improbable that the author of "Huckleberry Finn" (1885) had become aware of the fact that serious use was being made of him by the

philologists.[1] For in the prefatory note to that masterpiece he is careful to explain that "In this book a number of dialects are used, to wit: The Missouri negro dialect; the extremest form of the backwoods Southwestern dialect; the ordinary 'Pike County' dialect; and four modified varieties of this last. The shadings have not been done in a haphazard fashion or by guess-work; but painstakingly and with the trustworthy guidance and support of personal familiarity with these several forms of speech."

Oddly, Ellis does not quote "The Biglow Papers" as a specimen of Yankee dialect; and he published too early to avail himself of the studies in Hoosier dialect by Mr. James Whitcomb Riley, — one of our recent graduates.

Ellis's latest and bulkiest volume — the fifth — is devoted entirely to the dialects of modern English. He divides the map of England, excluding Wales and the Scotch Highlands, by ten transverse lines, running roughly east and west, according to certain dialect tests. North of a given line, *e.g.*, the word *some* is pronounced *soom;* south of it *sŭm;* north, *house* = *hōōs;* south, = *haus*. He then maps out the country into forty-two dialectic districts; explaining,

[1] Ellis's fourth volume was issued in 1874.

however, that if minor local peculiarities be taken account of, the number of dialects will easily rise into the hundreds. Those familiar with the peasant speech of certain districts can often distinguish between the language of two different villages.

All our earlier literature was dialectic, seriously and unconsciously so. A man wrote in Northumbrian or East Anglian or Wessex or Kentish English, for just the same reason that Theocritus wrote in Doric, and Burns in Ayrshire Scotch: because it was his mother tongue. It is merely owing to social and political accidents that the king's English, or literary language, is a modified descendant of the East Midland. If the royal city of Winchester had remained the capital of England, we might be using to-day the forms of speech which amuse us in Mr. Hardy's rustics. If York and Lincoln, instead of Oxford and Cambridge, had become great academic centres, we might be using forms of speech like those which amuse us in Tennyson's "Northern Farmer." I have mentioned Mr. Ellis's use of American humorists by way of leading up to a few notes (necessarily very superficial and unscientific) on the employment of dialect, brogue, and other language peculiarities as

comedy material on the Elizabethan stage. The sense of the ridiculous provoked by the different ways in which Englishmen inflect and pronounce their common tongue found literary expression earlier than is generally believed. Trevisa, in the famous passage added to his translation of Higden, is impressed by the uncouthness in the speech of "uplondysh" men, and specially of Northerners. In Chaucer's "Reeves Tale" the *patois* of the two Northern undergraduates at Cambridge is carefully studied. And when one of them says to the other, "Aleyne, by God, thou is a fon!" instead of "thou art a fool," the fourteenth-century Londoner was perhaps as much tickled as we are to-day by the Southern dialect novelist's "We'uns done done it," and the like.

The impression that the comic use of dialect in drama and fiction is a purely modern feature is not correct. But it is true that the observation and notation of speech peculiarities have increased vastly, both in range and delicacy, since the time of Fielding, or even since the time of Scott. It is one of the marks of realism, which seeks to express not only the inner truth, but also the external fact. The Scotch of Lismahago, or the rustic diction of Squire

Western, seems very crude beside the kail-yard dialogues of Barrie and Watson, or the Midland provincialisms in George Eliot. And yet George Eliot protests against too slavish an adherence to local speech. In a letter to Mr. Skeat, in which she says that "Silas Marner" employs the dialect of North Warwickshire, and "Adam Bede" that of North Stafford and the neighboring part of Derbyshire, she writes: "My inclination to be as close as I could to the rendering of dialect, both in words and spelling, was constantly checked by the artistic duty of being generally intelligible. . . . It has been my intention to give the general physiognomy rather than a close portraiture of the provincial speech, as I heard it, in the Midland or Mercian region. It is a just demand that art should keep clear of such specialties as would make it a puzzle for the larger part of the public." Mr. Riley tells me that this is his own principle in his rendering of the Hoosier dialect, and that he thinks dialect is much too often overdone in novels and poems.

The progress of realism is likewise responsible for the more colloquial character of the talk in modern novels. Thackeray contrasts the slangy ease of contemporary book talk with that old "bewigged, bepowdered D'Arblay conver-

sation" which prevailed in the fashionable fiction of 1800. And mention of Thackeray reminds us that cockney in Thackeray and Dickens is not identical with Stevenson's and Kipling's cockney. Its chief marks in the forties and fifties, besides the misuse of the aspirate, which is a universal shibboleth of the vulgar Englishman, seem to have been the interchange of *v* and *w*, as in Mr. Weller's "put it down a *wee*, my lud;"[1] the clipping of the final *g* in the present participle; its change to *k* in words like *anything*, and its improper addition to words like *ruin* and *linen*, *e.g.* "I little thought one of that family was a-goin' to ruing me — yes, ruing me. Har you a-goin' to pay me? You've lived in this 'ous four year. You've 'ad my substance, my plate and lining. You howe me a milk and butter bill of two 'undred pound. You must 'ave noo-laid heggs for your homlet and cream for your spanel dawg." (Raggles, butler to Rawdon Crawley in "Vanity Fair.") The cockney drawl in words like *dawg* and *Gawd* is common to Thackeray and Kipling. But we hear nothing in the former of that change of *ā* to *ī*, *e.g.* *blime* for *blame*, which seems to distinguish the present-day cockney.

[1] Now, it is said, disappeared for a generation.

In this country, though we have no proper dialects, but only corrupt or divergent forms of speech, we have every day new dialect novels, in Louisiana creole, Pennsylvania Dutch, plantation negro, New England Yankee, the idiom of the Tennessee mountains, of the Pacific coast, and what not. And the shade, the *nuance*, is studiously recorded; the specialties that differentiate the Virginian from the Georgian, the Philadelphian (*wite weat wiskey*) from the Bostonian; the eastern Massachusetts *călf*, *àsk* from the western Massachusetts *căf*, *ăsk*. Mr. Howells indicates by his spelling the vocalizing of the *r* in the mouth of one young lady from New York.

"It's the eayly biyd that catches the woym." This sharp scrutiny of local variations is illustrated by the well-known cut in *Life*, turning upon the pronunciation, in four American cities, of the word *vāse*, *vāze*, *văhz*, *vawz*. Apropos of this, it may be worth while to notice that Charles Astor Bristed, writing to Mr. Ellis in 1871, testifies that "all Americans pronounce *vase*," but he hears that the British Museum pronunciation is *vawz*. Whereupon Mr. Ellis inquired at the Museum and found that the Antiquities Department said *văhz;* but was told by one of the assistants in that de-

partment that "he would say *vawz* of a modern vessel to contain flowers." "In fact, he seemed to distinguish different kinds of vases by the pronunciation." This seems to me much funnier than the anecdote in *Life*, taken in connection with which it affords a date or two in the history of Anglomania; for akin to this close observation of dialect, is the perhaps somewhat excessive attention bestowed in international novels on Briticisms and Americanisms, or locutions distinctive of the English of England and those distinctive of the English of America, — such as "baggage checks," and "luggage brasses," etc.

But an examination of the Elizabethan plays shows that our ancestors were not incurious of language peculiarities. Old comedy, in particular, affords a rich variety of dialect, brogue, broken English, *argot* or slang, technical jargon, gibberish or purposed nonsense, preciosity, euphuism, malapropriety, and foreign languages, — French, German, Spanish, Latin, Dutch, Romany, and others. In the preparation of this paper I have had time to examine systematically only the plays of Shakspere and Ben Jonson, and my illustrations will be drawn entirely from those two writers; though a general recollection of the practice of other

Elizabethan dramatists emboldens me to say — without special investigation — that their mode of representing provincial usage agrees in the main with Shakspere's and Jonson's. And here it may be well to restate the doubtless familiar distinction between dialect, brogue, and broken English.

A dialect is folk-speech, a form of the mother tongue spoken by people of native stock, long settled in the district where it prevails. It is of quite as ancient and respectable descent as the accepted speech. Accident has reduced it to the condition of a local or provincial idiom. It has diverged from the standard literary language; or rather the latter has diverged from it. For dialects, as is well known, are conservative and cling to many vocables, inflections, syntactical usages, and pronunciations which are nearer to the primitive tongue than those which have displaced them in the accepted speech.

Brogue occurs where an entire population of alien blood or tongue acquires the language of its conquerors or its subjects or its neighbors, as the case may be; and acquires it, naturally, with a difference, importing into the foreign speech many of its own native peculiarities.

Broken English is merely the imperfectly

spoken English of this or that individual foreigner, and differs according to his nationality. A Lancashire miner, a Lothian Scotchman, or a Dorset peasant speaks a genuine dialect. Bating bad grammar, word corruptions, and similar vulgarisms, the language spoken by That Lass o' Lowrie's was once just as good English as the variety now spoken in London. Indeed, the broad Scotch, which has an important literature of its own, is hardly to be described as a dialect; it has the dignity of a national language.

On the other hand, the English spoken by the bordering Celts — Irish, Welsh, or Highland Scotch — is a brogue. The creole English in Mr. Cable's novels is a brogue; and so is Pennsylvania Dutch. These are the adopted speech of old and extensive communities. But pidgin English and the English of Hans Breitmann's ballads and of the comedy Frenchman, are merely varieties of broken English.

Shakspere was a Warwickshire man, of the next county to Leicester; and Dr. Evans, in his "Leicestershire Words, Phrases, and Proverbs," testifies that "none of the Leicestershire writers are so rich in illustrations of the Leicestershire dialect as Shakspere and Drayton." The average reader of Shakspere is probably

not aware of any dialectal peculiarity in his language. Doubtless an examination of archaic and provincial glossaries, like that of Wright or of Nares and Halliwell, would show quite a list of words in Shakspere's plays which are no longer current in literary English, though still used colloquially in the Midland counties. But I am not concerned at present with this part of the subject. Shakspere used such words naturally and unconsciously, without being sensible of any difference between them and other terms of accepted speech. It is the conscious use, for comic effect, of dialects other than his own, which I wish to speak of.

The broad divisions of English dialects are three, — Northern, Midland, and Southern. Of course these shade into each other at the edges, and there are infinite sub-varieties; but the general lines of division remain to-day, as they did in the fourteenth century, when a manuscript is classified as Northern, Midland, or Southern, according to some leading characteristics, such as the inflection of the personal pronoun, or the plural ending of verbs, *es* in the North; *en* in the Midland; *eth* in the South.

Now, it is observable that when the Elizabethan playwriters have occasion to imitate the speech of a rustic or peasant, they almost invariably

make him talk in the Southern dialect. A striking peculiarity of this dialect is the use of initial *v* and *z* for *f* and *s*, respectively. These softer and probably older sounds are still heard in the peasant speech of Dorset, Somerset, Wiltshire and parts of Berkshire and Gloucester, — all in the old Wessex country. You find them in the talk of Thomas Hardy's rustics, in William Barnes's poems in the Dorset dialect, and in the local literature of the White Horse Vale, as reported in "School Days at Rugby." Mr. Ellis says that this pronunciation of initial *f* and *s*, which once extended over all the southern tier of counties from Devon to Kent, has long since gone out in the East. But if we can trust to the Elizabethans, it was still common in the seventeenth century in Sussex, Surrey, and Kent. In "Bartholomew Fair," where three different dialects are introduced, one of the characters, Puppy, a wrestler, is described as a Western man, and he talks in this way : —

"Zurs, do you vlinch and leave us in the zuds now? . . . Do my Northern cloth zhrink in the wetting?" But in the "Tale of a Tub," the scene of which is in Finsbury Hundred, all the low-class characters, who are Middlesex men, mechanics and petty constables of Islington, Hampstead, Kentish-town, and other Lon-

don suburbs, talk this same dialect. They all say *vace* for *face*, *zay* for *say*, etc. Some of them use other Southern forms, such as *thik* = this, O.E. *thylce;* and *hun* or *'un*, which is the O.E. accusative *hine*, long since displaced in classical English by the dative *him*. Some of them use *che* = I. This last-named form, once widely in vogue, especially in the combinations *cham*, *chud*, *chave*, *chill* = I am, I would, etc., is now confined to a small territory including some dozen villages on the border of Dorset and Somerset, which Ellis calls the land of *utch* or *utchy*, that being the shape assumed by the pronoun at Montacute and the few neighboring places where the word survives.

In Whalley's note on the past participle *yvound* = O.E. *gefunden* in the "Tale of a Tub," he says, "This play is in the Western dialect." But Gifford adds, "The dialect (which is only partially Western) was, I believe, once more general than is commonly supposed." At all events, we find it here (1633) in London itself; and nearly thirty years earlier in "King Lear" (probably 1606), we find it in Kent. In the fields near Dover, Edgar assumes for a few minutes the character of a Kentish peasant, and speaks three short speeches in a dialect identical with that used by Jonson in "Bartholo-

mew Fair" and the "Tale of a Tub." "Chill not let go, zir, without vurthur 'casion. . . . An chud ha' bin zwaggerd out o' my life, 'twould not ha' bin zo long as 'tis by a vortnight. Keep out che vor ye," etc. This last phrase, "che vor ye," is used by one of the persons in the "Tale of a Tub," — "che vore 'un," *i.e.* "I warn him." This same Somerset dialect is employed in Whetstone's "Promos and Cassandra," — the source of Shakspere's "Measure for Measure," and in the "Contention Between Liberality and Prodigality" (1602), a comedy. That initial *v* and *z* (for *f* and *s*) prevailed in Kent in the fourteenth century is proved by the "Ayenbite of Inwyt" (Remorse of Conscience), written by Dan Michel of Northgate, in that county, in the year 1340. The spelling in the "Ayenbite of Inwyt" is carefully phonetic. Initial *sh* is spelled *ss*; initial *s* in Saxon words is spelled *z*: but in French words like *sewe*, it is spelled *s*, as though the native sound had not yet extended to words of Romance origin. Jonson makes no such distinction; and indeed is rather inconsistent in his orthography, anyway, spelling sometimes *zure*, and sometimes *sure*, and the like. Whether Shakspere, who was much less of a scholar than Jonson, is to be taken as sufficient evidence,

on the strength of these few speeches in "Lear," that these Somerset forms still lingered in Kent in 1606, seems to me doubtful. It was perhaps a dramatic convention to make all Southern English peasants speak in this way; and a Warwickshire man would scarcely have been likely to distinguish carefully between South-eastern and Southwestern usages.

No attempt is made by either Shakspere or Jonson to indicate the peculiarities of Southern vowel pronunciation, such as the breaking of *a*, written by modern dialect poets like Barnes, either as *ea* or *aa*: *faäce*, *Meäry*, etc. Neither do they record the intruded *w* in words like *hwome*, *mwore*, *bwoy*. Take a stanza from Barnes's Dorset poems, e.g.: —

> "An if you looked 'ithin their door,
> To zee em in their pleäce,
> A-doen housework up avore
> Their smilin' mother's feäce;
> You'd cry, 'Why, if a man would wive
> An' thrive 'ithout a dower,
> Then let en look en out a wife
> In Blackmore by the Stour.'"

So in the Vale of White Horse, where Tom Hughes boasts "the twang of the real old Saxon tongue" is still heard, the feast is the *veast*, and the blowing stone is the *blawing stwun*: "like

to hear un, sir?" asks mine host, unconsciously using the real old Saxon accusative *hine*.

"Throo aall the waarld owld Gaarge would bwoast
Commend me to merry owld England mwoast;
While vools gwoes praating vur and nigh
We stwops at whum, my dog and I."

In these passages we have, besides the common marks of Wessex English noted by Shakspere and Jonson, the vowel breakings and the parasitic *w* of which they give no sign. It is not probable that these are of modern growth. The fact doubtless is that the old dramatists' acquaintance with the dialect was superficial. They noted a few of its more obvious peculiarities and left the rest to the actor. Indeed, the notation of vowel sounds needs a phonetic alphabet, like glossic or palæotype, an instrument of precision far beyond the reach of popular writers, especially in the rudimentary stage of dialect writing in the seventeenth century.

Neither Shakspere nor Jonson notices the distinguishing Southern inflections, such as *I be*, *thou bist*, *he be*, *we be*, for the Northern and Midland *am*, *art*, *is*, and *are*; nor the frequent Southern confusion of the nominative and objective cases of the personal pronoun.

"Her ain't a callin o' we,
Us don't belong to she."

But this last is perhaps modern. Nor do they seek to give local color by the use of provincial words. The English Dialect Society is now bringing out full glossaries of such terms. The volume devoted to West Somersetshire dialect, *e.g.*, extends to 876 pages. But the old dramatists' rendering of dialect applies mainly to pronunciation, very slightly to grammar, and hardly at all to vocabulary.

In "The Alchemist," Kestril, the angry boy, who seems to be from Norfolk, has a touch of East Anglian in his speech. This is limited to the use of *kuss* = kiss, *suster* = sister, *wull* = will, and *mun* = must.

In "Bartholomew Fair," a clothier, described as "a Northern man," quarrels in dialect with Puppy, the Western man. He says *meeghty*, a spelling obviously meant to indicate that the *gh* is guttural. He says *I is* for *I am*,—a usage which Prince Lucien Bonaparte and other observers note as a character of the dialect prevailing throughout the ancient Northumbria, *i.e.* the modern counties of York, Durham, Northumberland, Cumberland, and Westmoreland. He uses also *ā* for *ō*, and the following speech is quite easily recognizable by the modern reader as Northern English: "I'll ne mare: my waim warkes too mickle with this auready."

But quite incorrectly Jonson makes him say, *paiper* = piper, and *vull* for *full*, which is Southern, if it is anything. However, only three short speeches are given to this character. Aubrey reports that Jonson "took a catalog from Mr. Lacy of the Yorkshire dialect for the clownery to his comedy called the 'Tale of a Tub.'" A far more elaborate study of Yorkshire dialect is given in "The Sad Shepherd." Gifford tells us that he got it up carefully with this same Lacy, who was a player and a native of Yorkshire. Cunningham, commenting on this, reminds us that Jonson's grandfather was a Scotchman, and that Ben probably knew something of the Lowland Scotch, which has much in common with Northern English. Be this as it may, Jonson has given us no Scotch dialect, unless the single line of Scotch be his in "Eastward Ho," which he wrote in collaboration with Marston and Chapman, and which got them all into prison. A man upset in a boat lands at Cuckold's Haven and meets two gentlemen. One says, "I ken the man weel. He is one of my £30 knights." Was this King Jamie? In "The Sad Shepherd" five of the characters speak in Yorkshire dialect with the common marks of Northern English familiar to the modern reader: such as the broad *a* for

Southern *o*; *who*, *two*, *no*, *from*, *clothes*, *nose* becoming *wha*, *twa*, *na*, *fra*, *claithes*, *nase;* the hard *c* or *k* for Southern *ch*: *church*, *such*, *much*, *which*, *breeches* becoming *kirk*, *syke*, *mickle*, *whilk*, and *breeks*. We have *gif* for *if*, and many instances of the Northern present participle in *-and*, as *comand*, *trilland*, *stink-and;* *sal* and *suld* = shall and should; *sel* = self, *mysel*, *hersel*, etc. *Kye* = cows; *dritty* = dirty; *dur* = door; *wairs* = worse. Provincial words and phrases occur, too, such as *ken*, *gang*, *tyke*, *limmer*, *sowter* = cobbler (cf. Suter Johnny in "Tam O'Shanter") and *gar* = cause, make: "I'se gar take the new breekes fra them." *I'se* = I shall.

Elision: *hae* = have; *pu'* = pull. "Take *tent* to this." Whether the dialect is at all points correct here; whether some of the words and forms are not more properly Scotch than North English, I am not learned enough in Yorkshire to determine. But even if the dialect does not correspond exactly to modern Yorkshire dialect writing, it may well be that Lowland Scotch and Yorkshire were more nearly alike in the seventeenth than in the nineteenth century. They were both part of the old Northumbrian kingdom and inherited a once common tongue.

There is a single instance of broad Scotch in Shakspere. It is put into the mouth of Captain Jamie in "Henry V," a play that has a great variety of language,—Scotch-English, Welsh-English, Irish-English, French-English, and English-French; to say nothing of the tall talk of Ancient Pistol, who rants in scraps of playhouse blank verse; and of the blundering tongue of Dame Quickly, who anticipates Mrs. Malaprop. Captain Jamie has but four speeches, and his Scotch differs little from Ben Jonson's Yorkshire. "It *sall* be *vary gud*, *gud feith*, *gud* captains *bath*. Ay'll *de gud* service or ay'll *lig* i' the *grund* for it. . . . I *wad* full fain hear some question 'tween you *twey*." This is correct enough so far as it goes, but it goes very little way. And what did Shakspere mean by writing *de* for do? This is not Scotch. Perhaps a misprint.

To pass now from dialect proper to brogue, the comedy Irishman is a not infrequent figure on the Elizabethan stage. There is one in "Henry V,"—Captain MacMorris. The nurse in "The New Inn" is an Irishwoman. In Jonson's "Irish Masque" there is a whole chorus of Irishmen. And in "Bartholomew Fair" there is a character named Whit whose nationality is not mentioned, and concerning

whom I was unable to decide whether he is an Irishman, a Jew, or an Amarugian.* He says *shentlemens*, like a modern old-clothes man. He says *vil* and *vould* and *vit* and *voman*, like a Dickens cockney, or rather like a German trying to pronounce *w*. But in other respects he talks like Shakspere's and Jonson's Irishmen. Sometimes *ph* = *wh*, like a Frenchman's *phat I tells you*. It is impossible to identify the brogue in Elizabethan plays with the brogue as we know it to-day. The invariable mark of an Irishman in the old drama is saying *sh* for *s*, and sometimes for *st*, *s*, soft *g*, or *z*. He says *ish* for *is*, *beseeched* for *besieged; doshen* = dozen, and *shubshects* = subjects. In Shakspere he swears *By Crish!* in Jonson *By Creesh!* But Shakspere is not consistent even in this; half the time he writes *is*, and half the time *ish*. Captain MacMorris in "Henry V" speaks only four times, and one conjectures that Shakspere knew no more Irish than Scotch. His Irishman finds no difficulty in pronouncing *th*; but Jonson's Irishmen pronounce it usually *d* or *t*;[1] though Jonson, too, is inconsistent here; sometimes he writes *thou*, sometimes *dou*, and sometimes *tou*. Jonson's Irishmen often, though not al-

[1] Cf. modern *wid* = with; *troat* = throat, etc.

ways, substitute *v* for *w*, *t* for *d* (*Got* — like a Welshman), and *ph* = *wh*. Here is a bit of dialogue from "The Irish Masque": —

"Phair ish te king?"

"Phich ish te king?"

"Tat ish te king."

"Ish tat te king? Got blesh him!"

The vowel variations are unimportant, though Jonson occasionally writes *ee* for *i*, as *leeke* for *like*, *creesh* = Christ, etc.; *clothes* is written *cloysh*, and *monster*, *moynshter*; *becash* = because, perhaps represents a pronunciation something like the modern *bekase*, attributed now to Irishmen; *while* is written *phoyle*, and *white*, *phoyt*. You remember that Captain Costigan calls his *eye* his *oy*, — "that bloodshot orb." *Pray* is always *pree* in Jonsonian Irish, preserving perhaps the original sound of the Fr. *prier*. *Pree dee* is a constant phrase of Jonson's Irishmen, as is also *fait* and *trot*. Three very constant marks of the modern brogue are entirely absent from the old plays; these are the sounding of the diphthong *ea* as *a*, of short *e* as *i*, and the rolling *r*. The modern comedy Irishman says *hin* for *hen*; and he says *spake the worrud* = speak the word. The explanation of this is easy. The Irish learned English in the reigns of Elizabeth and

James; and at that time the English pronunciation in these respects was what the Irish is now. *R* was a strong letter in Elizabethan English; *ea*, and sometimes long *e* in such words as *severe*, were pronounced *a*. The sixteenth-century Englishman, like the nineteenth-century Irishman, said *bate*, *raison* = beat, reason. Falstaff, being called on for a reason, puns on the word. "If raisins were as plenty as blackberries, I would not yield you one on compulsion." The puns in Shakspere are much relied upon to fix pronunciation. They teach us, *e.g.*, that *Rome* = room. Constance, in "King John," exclaims, "Let me have room with Rome to curse awhile." Noah Webster gives this pronunciation as frequent in America in his time, and I can recall instances of it myself, in old-fashioned people.[1] An Irishman's speech differs from an Englishman's more in the general intonation than in the pronunciation of individual letters. But this it is impossible to represent phonetically: it must be left to the actor. There is an entire absence in the old plays of those Gaelic

[1] As to the Irish sound of *ĕ*, the rhymes in Dryden show that he pronounced *sinse*, *pretince*, and *divil*. *Tea* was still pronounced *tay* in Pope's time.

"There thou, great Anna whom three realms obey,
Dost sometimes counsel take and sometimes tea."

words which sprinkle the brogue of the modern comedy Irishman, — words like *colleen*, *dudeen*, *spalpeen*, *shillalah*, *avick*, *acushla*, *mavourneen*. The only one which I have noted is *usquebaugh*, occurring in "The Irish Masque." Nor do Shakspere and Jonson record any of those peculiar idioms and expressions which characterize the brogue in modern humorists from Handy Andy to Mr. Dooley, quite as importantly as the mere pronunciation; phrases like "Bad cess to ye, Sorra a wan of them," etc. Some of these are explained as translations into English of native Gaelic idioms, such as the consuetudinal present, "I do be living in Dublin," and "He was after leaving home" (He had left home).

The comedy Welshman is not a common figure in modern literature, but he was almost a stock figure on the old stage, and great pains were taken with his language. There are many Welsh in Shakspere, but only two of them speak in brogue, — Captain Fluellen, in "Henry V," and Sir Hugh Evans, in "Merry Wives." Jonson's masque, "The Honour of Wales," is written throughout in Welsh-English. Jonson and Shakspere agree in making their Welshmen use the sharp consonants $p = b$, $f = v$, and $t = d$; *prave*, *pelly*, *petter* = brave,

etc. "Alexander the Pig" (Captain Fluellen). *Ferry goot* = very good. *Davy* is *Tavy*, the national saint. "Taffy was a Welshman," etc. Evans swears "By the tevil and his tam."

The *s*, too, is sharply sibilant. (This is indicated by doubling it.) Shakspere in one passage spells *as*, *asse*. Jonson writes *cossin*, *byssy*, for *cousin* and *busy*. In both Shakspere and Jonson *g* is now and then written for *c* or *k*: *loog* you, *toudge* = touch, *stogs* = stocks. "I will knog his urinal about his knave's cogscomb." In both, initial *w*, and less frequently initial *j* are elided: *'oman*, *'urship*, *'orld*, *'ork*, *goot 'orts*, *Got 'udge me*, etc. Mr. Ellis says that a modern Welshman, untaught, still says *'oman*; but cites Professor March, of Lafayette College, to the effect that his Welsh students at Easton, Pa., pronounced *woman* just like himself, had no trouble with the *w*, and had never heard any other sound for it. One or two Welsh students in my graduate class did not pronounce English in the least like Shakspere's and Jonson's Welshmen, though their accent was very marked and peculiar. In Jonson and Shakspere both, the Welsh use a singular verb with a plural noun. But Shakspere records some grammatical peculiarities not noted by Jonson, *e.g.* Sir Hugh Evans uses the auxiliary *be* in

place of *have*. "Her father is make her a petter penny" = "Her father has made her a better penny." Less commonly *is* = will. Sir Hugh has furthermore an odd habit of using the English noun for the verb or the adjective; thus: "Can you *affection* the 'oman?" "It is a fery *discretion* answer;" "I will not be *absence* at the grace;" "She is *acquaintance* with Mistress Anne Page;" "I will *description* the matter to you." But Jonson — not Shakspere — makes Welshmen say *pyt*, *cym*, *cyntry* for *put*, etc. Why he spells *aull*, *haul*, *taulk*, etc., in Welsh speeches I cannot say, unless it be that the contemporary English pronunciation was *ahl*, etc. (Boston people say *ahlways*.)

Space fails me to carry out these notes into mere broken English and other forms of speech. There is a comedy Frenchman, Dr. Caius, in "Merry Wives," and one, M. Paine, in "The Case is Altered," and they talk much alike: say *vel* for *well:* "By gar, me be much glad see you," etc. The scene of Jonson's play is Milan, the persons of the play are Italian, and it is therefore an inconsistency of a kind not uncommon in the old drama, that there should be a Frenchman on the stage talking bad English when everybody supposedly is speaking Italian. Van Goose, in "The Masque of

Augurs," speaks Dutch-English. In "The Metamorphosed Gipsies," there are a few Romany terms like *gentry cove* and *rum morts*. Shakspere gave attention to verbal differences: Holofernes the pedant, in "Love's Labour's Lost," criticises Armado for pronouncing *debt*, *det*, and *doubt*, *dout*, and *neighbour*, *nebour;* showing that precisians, learned in derivations, still insisted on sounding the now silent letters. (The *b* in French was long silent, but Holofernes is a Latinist.) A number of words are blacklisted by Jonson as affected neologisms *e.g. peremptory* and *accommodate* ("Every Man in His Humour"). This conservatism is a familiar phenomenon in all literary history. The words ridiculed in "Les Précieuses Ridicules" are now good French. Ben Franklin wrote to Noah Webster in 1789, asking him to use his influence against such innovations as the verbs *notice*, *advocate*, and *oppose;* Americanisms, he called them, introduced since 1729. It is curious that watchmen and constables in Shakspere all blunder in speech like Mrs. Malaprop. Dogberry is a shining instance, but Dull, the constable in "Love's Labour's Lost," and Elbow, in "Measure for Measure," talk in the same way; and Jonson follows this stage tradition in the "Tale of a Tub," when Clench

says, *e.g.*, "You have remission to comprehend all such as are despected." Cf. "You shall comprehend all vagrom men" ("Much Ado about Nothing").

THE QUEEN OF HEARTS

THE QUEEN OF HEARTS

The Lady Elizabeth, who in the Low Countries and some parts of Germany is called the Queen of Bohemia, and, for her winning, princely comportment, the Queen of Hearts. — *The Familiar Letters of James Howell.* (1622.)

THE band in the *Schlossgarten* has played its last waltz and is still. Over yonder, on the lofty terrace whose angle cuts the sky sharply, a few promenaders yet linger. But here, on this broad *Altan* — great platform or balcony — at the west front of the castle, no footfall wakes the echoes. Lean on the stone balustrade and let the sight plunge downward through a wilderness of gardens, built up slope above slope on walls of solid masonry, intersected by steep pathways and stairs, pierced and tunnelled by all manner of passages, vaults, arcades, — a hanging labyrinth of rockwork and greenery. Far below are the red roofs of the narrow city, and the sound of the swift-rushing Neckar stream comes up through the twilight. The sun has set behind the Odenwald, and the vineyards on the opposite slope are already

indistinguishable. Over the Rhine plain ascend masses of dun rolling vapor, streaked with flames which lend a deeper tinge to the red sandstone façade of the Friedrichs-Bau, — façade *etwas überladen*, say the guide-books, with its rich Renaissance sculptures. Momently the sunset fades, and the whole vast ruin — Alhambra of the North — with its background of black, forest-covered mountain sinks into the arms of night.

Alt Heidelberg, du feine, now is your time again. With each new film of gathering darkness the present recedes, and the past takes its place on the stage and begins to

> "Rehearse its youth's great part
> 'Mid thin applauses of the ghosts."

It was on the platform at Elsinore that Hamlet met the Ghost, and legions of historic spectres haunt the Altan of the Heidelberger Schloss, — Tilly with his Bavarians, Turenne with his Frenchmen. The images of the old electors descend from their niches and hobble up and down across the stony pavement. But was not that the rustle of silk that passed us in the dark? And that wandering perfume, as of civet or pomander ball, — came it from the peruke or natural hairy covering of one of those

old electors? Do the locks of old Ruprecht or of old Otto Heinrich, then, thus breathe forth ambrosial odors as from the spicy shore of Araby the blest, after all these centuries?

And again! — Ah, pardon, fair princess, that in the darkness we mistook. It is indeed Elizabeth, — Elizabeth of England — of the Palatinate — of Bohemia. In the darkness we mistook, but now the moon is rising, and, as your own poet sang, —

> "You meaner beauties of the night,
> Which poorly satisfy our eyes
> More by your number than your light,
> You common people of the skies,
> What are you when the moon shall rise?"[1]

It is now nearly three centuries since Frederick V, Elector Palatine of the Rhine and builder of this Friedrichs-Bau, brought his young bride to Heidelberg, where her memory is still preserved in the Elisabethen-Pforte which gives admission to the Stückgarten and the little Elisabethen-Bau beyond. The gate was erected and the garden laid out in her honor, with fountains, grottos, parterres, and "orchards of English trees transplanted entire." She was the eldest daughter of James I, and her

[1] Sir Henry Wotton, "To his Mistress, the Queen of Bohemia."

life is not the least tragic chapter in the history of the Stuart house, so rich in the materials of tragedy and romance. Through her daughter, Sophia, the mother of George I, she is also the ancestress of Queen Victoria, and the link between the older and the later dynasty of English sovereigns.

Granddaughter of Mary, Queen of Scots, and godchild of the great Elizabeth of England, our princess was a little Scotch lassie seven years old, playing with her dolls in Linlithgow palace, when her father was called to the English throne. She was intrusted to the guardianship of Lord and Lady Harington, and reared at their country-seat, Combe Abbey, Warwickshire, about two miles from Coventry, where she had a little court of her own, with masters in music, writing, dancing, French, and Italian: physicians, nurses, ladies in waiting, grooms of the bedchamber and of the stable, yeomen, footmen, sumptermen, sempstresses, laundresses, and finally "a stud of nineteen or twenty horses." Combe Abbey was an old Cistercian monastery; and here among the deer and the swans, the great oaks and ancient cloisters, Elizabeth passed her girlhood. She became passionately fond of animals and of the chase. A portrait of the royal child,

taken at this period, represents her in company with a parrot, macaw, love-bird, dog, and monkey. Through her long years of widowhood and exile, hunting was her favorite amusement and the chief solace of her cares, and some little bird or beast the most acceptable present that could be made her.[1]

At the time of the Gunpowder Plot, in 1605, an attempt was made to seize Elizabeth, with the design of proclaiming her queen and converting her to Catholicism. Sir Everard Digby and a number of Catholic gentlemen assembled for a hunt on Dunmore heath, and secretly withdrawing from the hunting party, rode rapidly toward Combe Abbey. But meanwhile an alarm had been given; the Protestant gentry of the neighborhood were on foot; a courier who had ridden post all night from London brought news of the discovery and frustration of the plot; the princess, escorted by Lord Harington and his household, fled to Coventry, and put herself under the protection of the citizens; and the country rose upon the con-

[1] Evelyn, the diarist, who kissed her hand at The Hague in 1641, mentions her favorite lap-dog, Apollo, in his correspondence with Sir Edward Nicholas. "Of little dogs and monkeys," wrote Sir Dudley Carleton, "she hath no great want, having sixteen or seventeen in her own train."

spirators, hunted them down, and brought them to justice.

The effect of this exciting incident and of the narrow escape from death of her father and brothers, with both Houses of Parliament, was naturally to confirm in Elizabeth the Protestant principles which had been inculcated in her by her guardians. A stubborn Protestant she always remained, and circumstances afterward made her one of the foremost martyrs of the cause in Germany. She called Richelieu an "ulcerous priest." Among the trials of her later years none were sharper than the apostasy of two of her children. Her fourth son, Edward, married a lady of the French court and turned Catholic; her second daughter, Louise, fled secretly to a monastery in Antwerp and then into France, where she was confirmed by the papal nuncio, and took the veil at the Abbey of Maubuisson, of which she eventually became abbess. On the first of these occasions Elizabeth wrote to her eldest son that she would rather have died than see a child of hers renounce the faith of his fathers; and when it was proposed that this eldest son should be replaced in the electorate on condition of abjuring Protestantism, she exclaimed that she would strangle him first with her

own hands. She is the only Stuart of whom Carlyle finds anything good to say. "*Alles für Ruhm und ihr*," he writes, "'All for glory and her,' were the words Duke Bernhard of Weimar carried on his flag through many battles of that Thirty Years' War. She was of Puritan tendency, understood to care little about the four surplices at Allhallow-tide and much for the root of the matter."

But it is only in a very qualified sense that Elizabeth can be called a Puritan. Her Protestantism was inbred: her marriage to a prince who stood at the head of the league of evangelical princes in Germany made her popular among the English Puritans, who hated Spain and distrusted the Spanish leanings of James I. Her marriage, furthermore, removed her to a court of which the official religion was Calvinism. She was absent from England for half a century, all through the struggles of James I and Charles I with their Parliaments, through the Civil War and the Protectorate. We have no means of knowing what she thought of the High Church Laudian Episcopacy and the "four surplices at Allhallow-tide," or whether she thought at all of such matters. But she was faithful to the fortunes of her family. She was deeply shocked

— how could she be otherwise? — by the execution of her brother, Charles I; and what she said of Cromwell would not have pleased Cromwell's biographer. "There never was so great a hypocrite. Sure, Cromwell is the beast in the Revelations, that all kings and nations do worship. I wish *him* the like end and speedily."

Elizabeth was no Puritan. She had the gay, pleasure-loving spirit of her race, the Stuart fondness for masques and revels, games, dances, court pageantry, and shows of state. We read that during her winter at Prague, as Queen of Bohemia, her love of the drama gave offence to the stricter Calvinists; and that afterward at The Hague, the Dutch ministers were equally scandalized by the Arminianism of her chaplain, a *protégé* of Archbishop Laud, by her attendance at French plays, and by her low-necked dresses. They remonstrated with Elizabeth, who resented their interference, and with the Prince of Orange, who gave them cold comfort, and assured them that if they would preach better "the plays would be less frequented." As she grew older and was summoned more often to court, she entered into such pleasures with the eager enjoyment which is innocent and natural in a young girl, but which is assuredly not "of Puritan tendency." The retirement of

Combe Abbey became irksome to the princess: rooms were fitted up for her in Hampton Court and Whitehall, and her residence was fixed at Kew.

When she was fourteen, suitors for her hand began to present themselves. There was talk of France, of Spain, of Savoy; of a Duke of Brunswick and a Prince of Hesse, both of whom came to woo in person; of Count Maurice of Nassau, of an English Howard, and of a Scotch Hamilton. A proposal came from the great Gustavus Adolphus, destined at no distant day to champion the cause of German Protestantism, and incidentally the cause — alas! already lost beyond retrieve — of this same little English princess, who by a slight turn of the dice might have chanced to be the queen of the victorious hero Swede, instead of the wife of an outcast, broken-hearted *Winter-König*, or mockery snow monarch, — a king without a kingdom.

For the turn of the dice allotted her finally to Frederick V, the Palsgrave (*Pfalzgraf*) or Elector Palatine of the Rhine, who arrived in England in October, 1612, and conducted a four months' courtship with circumstances of great splendor on both sides, which moved contemporary Jenkins to flights of almost Asiatic elo-

quence and temporarily bankrupted the English court. There were all manner of receptions, processions, entertainments, banquets, marriage settlements and negotiations, interchange of gifts, bestowals of the Order of the Garter, ceremonies of betrothal, where glittered all manner of jewels, velvets, laces, feathers, silks. It is true, the death of Henry, Prince of Wales, in November cast a shadow over the festivities and plunged the court into mourning. But the funeral baked meats were soon disposed of, and the poets who had celebrated the obsequies of the deceased strung their lyres anew, and got ready their epithalamia.

The youthful pair, both of an age, and neither of them yet seventeen, were wedded on St. Valentine's Day, 1613, and Dr. Donne came to the rescue with spousal verses : —

" Hail, Bishop Valentine, whose day this is :
All the air is thy diocese,
And all the chirping choristers
And other birds are thy parishioners.
Thou marryest every year
The lyric lark and the grave, whispering dove,
The sparrow that neglects his life for love,
The household bird with the red stomacher :
Thou makest the blackbird speed as soon
As doth the goldfinch or the halcyon :
The husband cock looks out, and straight is sped,
And meets his wife, which brings her feather-bed :

This day more cheerfully than ever shine,
This day which might inflame thyself, old Valentine."

It is estimated that a folio volume would hardly contain all the poetry composed on this occasion. The University of Oxford alone emitted two hundred and forty-two epithalamia, mostly in Latin. Thomas Heywood, reckoned to be the most voluminous dramatist in English, or possibly in any language, — whose plays, either extant or providentially lost, are computed to have exceeded two hundred and twenty, — swelled his mellifluous throat in "A Marriage Triumph," which fills some thirty pages in the publications of the Percy Society. The spring, it seems, fell early in that year of grace, 1613, and the poet says : —

"The seasons have preferred the youthful spring
To be at this high state's solemnizing;
Who, lest he should be wanting at that day,
Brings February in attired like May,
And hath, for haste to show his glorious prime,
Slept o'er two months and come before his time. . . .
Bacchus hath cut his most delicious vine,
And sent it through his swiftest river Rhine,
Lest to those bridals it might come too late."

And in the "Nuptial Hymn" which closes his poem, he predicts that the princess will equal in fame her illustrious godmother, and, —

"Four great kingdoms after death
Shall memorize Elizabeth."

These expensive proceedings are duly chronicled in Nichols's "Progresses." They included tournaments, pageants, and triumphs by land and water, fireworks on the Thames, with a sham naval battle, and the like. Three court masques were presented, composed by Dr. Thomas Campion, George Chapman, and Francis Beaumont, — the "devices" of the last by no less a person than Francis Bacon, its title, "The Marriage of the Thames and the Rhine." The best of these was Campion's; and in reading its congratulatory prophecies, Fate, with ironic thumb nail, indents for us the margin of that well-known madrigal in its author's "Book of Airs": —

"Then wilt thou speak of banqueting delights,
Of masques and revels which sweet youth did make,
Of tourneys and great challenges of knights,
And all these triumphs for thy beauty's sake:
When thou hast told these honors done to thee,
Then tell, O tell how thou didst murder me."[1]

[1] For the ingenious but unconvincing theory that "The Tempest" was written for Elizabeth's marriage, see "Essays of an ex-Librarian," by Richard Garnett, New York and London, 1901, and "William Shakespeare," by George Brandes, pp. 647–653. For the lost play of "Cardenno," by Fletcher and Shakspere, acted at court "during the Princess Elizabeth's marriage festivities," see "A Life of William Shakespeare," by Sidney Lee, p. 258 (1898).

But the best and the best known of all the Muse's tributes to Elizabeth were Wotton's famous lines "To his Mistress, the Queen of Bohemia."[1] Sir Henry Wotton, for many years English ambassador at Venice, and afterward provost of Eton College, was a man of many accomplishments. He was wit, scholar, diplomat, poet. It was Wotton who defined an ambassador as "an honest gentleman employed to lie abroad for his country." He was a correspondent of Milton, and the subject of a pleasant biography by his friend and brother of the angle, Izaak Walton. He entertained and professed for Elizabeth that chivalrous devotion which her charms as a woman and her misfortunes as a queen inspired in so many gallant gentlemen, in Bernhard of Weimar, Christian of Brunswick, and the Earl of Craven. After the loss of Bohemia and the Palatinate, Wotton did his best, as English ambassador at the imperial court of Vienna, to negotiate their partial restoration. When the emperor presented him with a jewel valued at £1000, as a token of his personal esteem, he gave it away to an Italian lady, and explained to the emperor, as courteously as possible, that he could keep no gift that came from an enemy of his royal mistress.

[1] See p. 247.

Elizabeth sent him a portrait of herself, painted in her robes of state, and this Wotton bequeathed in his will to Charles II.

But now the curtain rises upon a very different scene in our drama. Frederick and Elizabeth had passed six years of wedded happiness at Heidelberg. She had borne her husband three children, — two boys and a girl. In 1619 the Protestant kingdom of Bohemia deposed the Emperor Ferdinand of Austria, and offered the Bohemian crown to the Elector Palatine. This was the beginning of the Thirty Years' War in Germany, and it was Elizabeth's hand which set the match to that terrible conflagration. Frederick was not deficient in physical courage, but he was a man of only moderate abilities and of no very strong character: tender, honorable, loyal, but self-distrustful, moody, irresolute, and easily influenced. "*Par boutades*," wrote Wotton, "the Elector is merry, but for the most part cogitative, or, as they here call it, *mélancolique*," — clearly not a leader of men, nor fitted to cope with the stern crisis which was at hand. He hesitated long, and as the event proved, wisely. His mother, the electress-dowager, a plain and shrewd old Dutchwoman, the daughter of William the Silent, besought him not to accept. "They are

carrying the Palatinate into Bohemia," were her prophetic words, when her son and daughter-in-law finally set out for Prague. For Elizabeth was of a different temper from her lord,—high-spirited, ambitious, sanguine, with the readiness to undertake and the recklessness of consequences which proceeds as much from levity and ignorance, as from courage: from a failure to know or to imagine the momentous issues which it confronts: the courage of a fly, of a weasel: the courage of all the Stuart pretenders: the courage of Rupert's charging Cavaliers before the Ironsides had taught them caution.

The one shadow on Elizabeth's marriage had been the opposition of her mother. She wanted her daughter to be a queen,—if possible, queen of Spain. She thought a petty German elector a match very much below the dignity of an English princess, and used to refer scornfully to Elizabeth as "Goody Palsgrave." Whether this taunt still rankled or not, it is certain that Elizabeth was urgent with her husband to take the Bohemian crown. She offered to sell all her jewels to maintain the cause, and proudly assured him: "Sie wollte lieber mit einem König Sauerkraut, als mit einem Kurfürsten Gebratens essen." And so, in the autumn of 1619, while Europe held

its breath, and all about the horizon were ominous storm-clouds

"With their stored thunder laboring up,"

and the greatest and grimmest war of modern times was preparing, this girl and boy set out to take seizin of their new kingdom, lightheartedly she, but he with many misgivings. They never saw Heidelberg again, nor ever again had any home of their own, any "continuing city," but spun about till their death day, like feathers or straws, in the black whirlwind that they had let loose. To grasp and hold that crown of Bohemia; to keep one's seat in that Siege Perilous and maintain that Castle Dangerous against assault, the strongest arm, the coolest head, the wariest eye were needed. Scarcely would a Henry of Navarre or a William of Orange have been equal to the emprise; and what chance had Frederick in that combat of giants, in a war where the generals were Tilly, Wallenstein, Gustavus?

The rest is history. On the 4th and 7th of November, respectively, Frederick and Elizabeth were crowned at Prague. Just a year later they were hunted fugitives, fleeing for their lives through Silesia and Brandenburg, to find an asylum at last at The Hague. "Questo

principe e intrato in un bello labyrinto," said Pope Paul IV, when he heard of Frederick's acceptance of the Bohemian throne. At first the new king and queen were popular with their subjects, — Elizabeth especially, whose frank and cheerful manners always easily won her friends. But soon difficulties began to thicken about them. The imperial armies were gathering : Spinola overran the Palatinate, and Frederick was placed under the ban of the empire. His soldiers were unpaid and mutinous, and disaffection showed itself among his people. He had brought with him to Prague his chaplain, Scultetus (Abraham Schultze), a bigoted Calvinist, who offended by his intolerance the Bohemian Protestants, the great majority of whom were Lutherans. Scultetus persuaded Frederick to remove, as idolatrous, the ancient images of saints which stood on the bridge over the Moldau. These were objects of reverence to the populace of Prague, and Frederick's order for their removal provoked a riot, which was quieted only by a proclamation recalling the former order. Finally, on November 8, 1620, the imperialists won a battle just outside of Prague, while Frederick was entertaining the foreign ambassadors at a state dinner in the royal palace ; and the winter king

and queen of Bohemia fled headlong, leaving kingdom, crown, crown jewels, and all to the mercies of the Austrian. The walls of Catholic Antwerp were placarded with pasquinades and caricatures, representing Elizabeth as an Irish beggar-woman with a child at her back, and her father carrying a cradle behind her, —a delicate allusion to her numerous progeny and almost annual confinements. The streets of the same city resounded with satirical ballads on the same theme; and the Jesuits devised a play "in which they feigned a post to come puffing upon the stage; and being asked what news, he answered that the Palsgrave was like to have shortly a huge, formidable army; for the king of Denmark was to send one hundred thousand, the Hollanders, one hundred thousand, and the king of Great Britain, one hundred thousand. But being asked thousands of what, he replied, the first would send him a hundred thousand red herrings, the second a hundred thousand cheeses, and the last a hundred thousand ambassadors."

This was a sneer at the timid policy of James, who preferred to negotiate rather than fight, and never could be brought to take up arms in his daughter's behalf, nor to recognize his son-in-law's royal title, for fear of offending

Spain. A war for the recovery of the Palatinate would have been popular in England, and the Parliament would cheerfully have voted supplies. The young gentlemen of the Middle Temple, with sword in one hand and wine cup in the other, pledged the health of the Lady Elizabeth, and, kissing their sword-blades, vowed to live and die in her service. And though the king of England would not declare war, thousands of English volunteers served in the Protestant armies of Germany under Sir Horace Vere, and later, in Charles I's reign, under the Marquis of Hamilton.

The States-General of Holland received the dethroned sovereigns with the kindest hospitality. They assigned them a pension and a residence at The Hague, where Elizabeth held a sort of little court. A great novelist [1] of our own day has drawn a picture of such a court: of the life of one of those wrecks of broken dynasties with which the capitals of modern Europe are familiar, with its intrigues and conspiracies; its hollow etiquette, meaningless ceremonial, petty squabbles over questions of precedence; its debts, jealousies, deferred hopes, pathetic loyalties, and shabby-genteel imitation of royal state. Elizabeth bore the

[1] Alphonse Daudet, "Les Rois en Exil."

ordeal best. Her character was superficial: she had a certain elasticity, levity, and toughness of disposition, a buoyancy as of cork or other light bodies, an unfailing zest in life, and an ability to forget great sorrows in the pleasure of the moment. "I am still of my wild humor," she wrote to Sir Thomas Rowe, "to be as merry as I can in spite of fortune." But Frederick's sensitive nature suffered more deeply. A dependent on the hospitality of a foreign state and the bounty of a grudging and dictatorial father-in-law, his position was most humiliating. His restlessness and despondency increased, and he absented himself as much as possible from The Hague. He took service with the Prince of Orange and afterward with Gustavus Adolphus, but he had no talent for command. With the aid of Duke Christian of Brunswick and that valorous soldier of fortune, Count Mansfeld, he maintained for some years a hopeless struggle for the recovery of the Palatinate.

It would be tedious to follow the history of the tiresome diplomacies and hardly less tiresome campaigns which were directed to this end. All was in vain: Heidelberg was taken by Tilly, plundered, and burned. The death of Gustavus on the field of Lützen extinguished

Frederick's last hope, and he died shortly after, in 1632, at Mentz and was buried at Sedan. History affords few examples of a royal pair more loving and faithful in prosperity and adversity alike than Frederick V of the Palatinate and his English wife. Long years of exile and widowhood were in reserve for her, and she bore them with still unfailing spirit. Her father died and was succeeded on the British throne by her brother Charles, and her brother was brought to the block. In the Civil War, her favorite son, the fiery Rupert (Ruprecht), born at Prague during her short tenure of the Bohemian crown, had distinguished himself as a dashing cavalry general in the royal service. Elizabeth was naturally outspoken in her indignation at the execution of Charles, and in denunciation of the Commonwealth. The Parliament thereupon withdrew the annual pension that it had voted her, and she was plunged deeply into debt. Ever shabbier grew the worn velvets and faded upholstery of her court at The Hague, — the presence chamber constantly hung with black since her husband's death. So that when princely and noble strangers, travelling through Holland, sought an interview with "the crowned and elected queen of Bohemia," she arranged to meet them in

the gardens of the Prince of Orange, or at some other place, to avoid the exposure of her poverty.

The Treaty of Westphalia had finally settled the Lower Palatinate upon her eldest living son, Charles Louis (Karl Ludwig), a mean-spirited man, who truckled to the English Parliament, withheld from his mother her dower rights in the Palatinate, and declined to receive her at Heidelberg. She wrote to her correspondent, Sir Edward Nicholas, that the wine which the elector sent her as a *douceur* was "stark naught." Elizabeth got little comfort from her children, — thirteen of them in all. Two turned Catholic. One of her sons was drowned at Rotterdam, and another at sea. A third was killed at the siege of Rethel. She quarrelled with two of her daughters, and in one way or another, all her children had left her before 1660, when the Restoration put her nephew, Charles II, on the English throne. Very much against the wish of that Merry Monarch, she returned in 1661 to England, which she had not seen for half a century. No apartments were assigned her at court, and she died a few months later at Leicester House, February 13, 1662. "It is pity," wrote the Earl of Leicester, "that she lived not a few

hours more, to die upon her wedding-day, and that there is not as good a poet to make her epitaph as Dr. Donne, who wrote her epithalamium upon that day unto St. Valentine."

Elizabeth Stuart was not a great woman, but she was a very charming one. Her biographer, Mrs. Green, attributes to her genius as well as beauty. She says that she "had a warm appreciation of literature," and that she "conversed freely in six languages." She praises her letters and certain verses and prayers of her composition, not only as "beautiful specimens of calligraphy," but as "intellectual efforts." But with all respect to Mrs. Green, Elizabeth's verses — like her son the elector's wine — are stark naught; and her letters, several hundred of which are preserved, do not show any uncommon powers of intellect. They show only that vivacity of temperament which is often mistaken for brightness of mind. Nor was her character, any more than her intellect, constructed on large lines. It was sound, but shallow, without seriousness, distinction, nobility, — quite unlike the great queens of history. She had many engaging traits, but few royal ones. She was affable, gracious, lively, good-natured to a fault, generous to extravagance: qualities that made her popular among

her *entourage*, whom she was quite incapable of governing. Her light-heartedness carried her victoriously through — or rather, over — the tragic calamities of her later days. From her quarrels with her children, one suspects that she had something, too, of that Stuart obstinacy and unreasonableness which seemed like firmness, but was only its narrow-minded counterfeit, and had a fatal way of announcing itself at the wrong time, — irritating where it could not control.

Even her beauty has been questioned. By courtesy all princesses are beautiful, and, if we may believe the poets, Elizabeth was one of the most beautiful. Pepys, who saw her at The Hague in 1660, describes her as "a very debonair but a plain lady." But she was then sixty-four years old. Likenesses of Elizabeth abound: paintings at Combe Abbey, Hampton Court, Kensington Palace, and in many private galleries; and engraved portraits in the print-room of the British Museum and elsewhere. From an analysis of four of these, by Honthorst, Derick, and Mierevelt, Mr. H. S. Wilson[1] ungallantly concludes that the queen of Bohemia could never have been beauti-

[1] "Studies in History, Legend, and Literature." London, 1884.

ful. Her hair, it seems, was red; complexion "opaquely white," the lips thin, the forehead narrow; and though the hands were fine and the bearing queenly, one retains "an impression of shrewdness and vivacity, coupled with a mean intellect and with a calculating heart."

The last words seem over-harsh. The only portrait of Elizabeth known to me, or easily accessible to the American reader, is the engraved frontispiece in Mrs. Green's "Princesses of England,"[1] which is the picture of a pretty woman, if not of a beauty, and strongly recalls the face of her grandmother, the Queen of Scots. The features are good and the expression pleasant and bright. The face has the Stuart oval, and that fulness of the eye which was a family trait, but not the pointed chin which is mentioned as a feature in some of the portraits. When all allowances have been made for the exaggerations of contemporary praise, there was enough that was gracious and winning about Elizabeth's personality to account for the interest that her misfortunes aroused and the devotion that she herself inspired. She was the only royal princess of England, the other daughters of James

[1] The portrait by Honthorst is reproduced in Rait's "Five Stuart Princesses." New York, 1902.

I having died in infancy, and high hopes followed her abroad.

After the loss of her crown, two champions, in particular, took the field in her behalf. The first of these, her cousin, Duke Christian of Brunswick, administrator of the bishopric of Halberstadt, was more like some knight-errant in the old chivalry romances than a soldier of modern Europe. He wore her glove on his helmet, and inscribed upon his banner the motto, *Tout pour Dieu et ma très chère reine.* He wrote to her, after his defeat by Tilly, "I entreat you most humbly not to be angry with your faithful slave for this misfortune, nor take away the good affection which your majesty has hitherto shown me, who love you above all in this world. Consider that victory is in God's hands, not mine, and that I cannot challenge victory, although my courage in dying for your majesty, and serving you will never fail me; for I esteem your favour a hundred times dearer than life: and be assured that I shall try, with all my power, not only to reassemble my troops, but also, moreover, to raise as many more, that I may be in better condition to serve faithfully your majesty, whom I love *outre le possible*, assuring you that as long as God gives me life, I shall serve you

faithfully and expend all I have in the world for you. — Your most humblest, most constant, most faithful, most affectionate and most obedient slave, who loves you and will love you infinitely and incessantly to death."

Christian's left arm was wounded in action. He had the trumpets sound while it was amputated, and sent word to Elizabeth that he had another arm left to fight God's battles and hers. The Duke of Brunswick was a mediæval and slightly fantastic figure. But Elizabeth's other champion, the Earl of Craven, served her in a more modern way, with equal chivalry and to better purpose. He was the son of a lord mayor of London, from whom he inherited an immense fortune. He first met Elizabeth in Holland, in the days of her exile; and, resigning from the Dutch service, was made a commander of the English volunteers operating in Germany with Frederick and Gustavus in 1632. He fought in those wars with reckless daring, was twice wounded, taken prisoner with Prince Rupert by the imperialist general Hatzfeld, and ransomed himself for £20,000. He volunteered to contribute £30,000 to raise a fleet for the Palatinate. When Elizabeth's pension from the English Parliament remained unpaid, Craven paid it. He gave

£50,000 to Charles II, and his own estates were sequestrated by Parliament for his devotion to the royal cause. By 1649 he had become a permanent figure in Elizabeth's court at The Hague, where he was known as "the little Lord Craven" and the *vieux milord*, — nicknames bestowed by the young princesses, for whom he used to buy jewellery and sweetmeats, and who made fun of their benefactor, just as that scapegrace of a George Osborne in "Vanity Fair" made fun of Major Sugarplums. Indeed we have to go to fiction to find his like, for history records few instances of a lifelong devotion, so delicate, so self-sacrificing, so disinterested. So disinterested, indeed, that the censorious world could not quite believe in it, and whispered that there was a private marriage between Elizabeth and the earl. But he died unmarried in 1697.

When Elizabeth returned to England in 1661 and found no provision for her entertainment at court, Lord Craven's hospitality placed at her service his house in Drury Lane, where she was his guest for several months, until arrangements were completed for the lease of Leicester House. Combe Abbey, where she had spent her girlhood, was purchased by Craven from Lucy, Countess of Bedford. At

Elizabeth's death, she bequeathed her papers and portraits to this old and faithful friend, who deposited them at Combe Abbey, where they still remain.